

Hegel on Being

Quality and
the Birth of
Quantity
in Hegel's
'Science
of Logic'

Stephen
Houlgate

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Quality and the Birth of Quantity in Hegel's 'Science of Logic'



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Quantity and Measure in Hegel's 'Science of Logic'

Stephen Houlgate



HEGEL ON BEING

VOLUME 1

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THE BIRTH OF
QUANTITY IN
HEGEL'S SCIENCE
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Stephen Houlgate

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
LONDON • NEW YORK • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

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First published in Great Britain 2022

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Cover design by Ben Anslow
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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Houlgate, Stephen, author.

Title: Quality and the birth of quantity in Hegel's logic / Stephen Houlgate,
University of Warwick, UK.

Description: London ; New York, NY, USA : Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. |

Series: Hegel on being ; vol. 1 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021015194 (print) | LCCN 2021015195 (ebook) | ISBN 9781350189386 (hb) |
ISBN 9781350189393 (epdf) | ISBN 9781350189409 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1770–1831. | Logic.

Classification: LCC B2949.L8 H68 2021 (print) | LCC B2949.L8 (ebook) | DDC 160—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021015194>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021015195>

ISBN: Pack: 9781-3501-9068-9
HB: 9781-3501-8938-6
ePDF: 9781-3501-8939-3
eBook: 9781-3501-8940-9

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

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For Mary

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PREFACE

G.W.F. Hegel's *Science of Logic*, first published between 1812 and 1816, is one of the most profound works of philosophy ever written. It is a text of penetrating insight, extraordinary range and incomparable subtlety. Yet it is largely ignored by professional philosophers in the Anglo-American world (and not only there). Other works by Hegel, such as the *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Right*, have become more widely studied on both sides of the Atlantic, but the *Logic* remains for the most part unread and unknown. Karl Popper famously poured scorn on what he called Hegel's "mystery method" of "*dialectics*" for embracing contradiction and so (allegedly) destroying "all argument and all progress" (Popper [1966], 2: 28, 39); and it appears that many Anglo-American philosophers have seen no good reason, and no need, to challenge such dismissive views of Hegelian logic. As a result, few have any understanding of the true philosophical significance of Hegel's *Logic* or, indeed, any idea what the book is actually about. Furthermore, the *Logic* is neglected, or actively disparaged, even by some experts on Hegel who are otherwise sympathetic to his thought. Allen Wood, for example, insists that "Hegel totally failed in his attempt to canonize speculative logic as the only proper form of philosophical thinking", because "many of the philosophical paradoxes Hegel needs in order to make his system work are based on shallow sophistries" and "the resolution to paradoxes supplied by his system is often artificial and unilluminating" (Wood [1990], 4).

The aim of the present study is to explain in clear and accessible terms what Hegel is seeking to achieve in his *Logic* – in particular in its first book, "the doctrine of being" – and to demonstrate that Hegel's text, though formidably difficult, is full of profound and often challenging insights and very far from "unilluminating". I have presented many aspects of my interpretation of the

Logic in other essays and, especially, in *The Opening of Hegel's Logic* (2006). The present study differs from the latter, however, in significant respects.

Most importantly, it covers not just the first two chapters of the section on quality (from “being” to true, “affirmative infinity”), as the earlier book does, but the whole of the doctrine of being. The present study thus provides a detailed account of all the categories of quality, quantity and measure, and explains how they are derived by Hegel from the initial category of pure being. In order to highlight the wide-ranging significance of Hegel’s analyses, I also relate them to the thought of other philosophers, including Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schelling and Frege. In particular, this study contains an extensive discussion of Hegel’s critique of Kant’s antinomies, and what is to my knowledge the most detailed comparison in English, and perhaps in any language, of Hegel and Frege. This material, together with my account of Hegel’s conception of differential calculus, is presented in chapters entitled “Excursus” to distinguish them from the chapters that actually take Hegel’s speculative logic forward. These excursuses draw on other chapters and are intended to be read as part of the study’s overall argument, but they can be read on their own. They can, however, also be skipped by readers wishing to focus principally on the logical development that Hegel describes, and returned to later.

All chapters have been written specially for the present study, but in some I discuss material that is also covered in *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*. Some topics have been treated more concisely in this study than in *The Opening*, whereas topics discussed rather cursorily in the earlier book (such as Hegel’s critique of Kant) or neglected altogether (such as Hegel’s account of “absolute method” in the final chapter of the *Logic*) have been given detailed treatment here. This new study is thus designed to complement and extend the analysis of the *Logic* given in *The Opening*, rather than replace it. This study does, however, include a discussion of Robert Pippin’s interpretation of Hegel that revises, and I hope improves on, the one presented in *The Opening*.

While working on this study, and in the years before, I have had the privilege of teaching Hegel’s *Logic* regularly at the MA level at Warwick and discussing it – often vigorously, but always fruitfully – with my PhD students. In particular, I would like to thank the following (former and current) research students for their inspiring energy, insight and companionship, without which writing this study would have been much harder and a lot less enjoyable: Ben Berger, Gene Flenady, Dino Jakušić, James Kay, Richard Lambert, Filip Niklas, Ahilleas Rokni, Chris Russell-Smith, Jaideep Shah, Henry Somers-Hall, Ioannis Trisokkas, Lee Watkins, Graham Wetherall, Mert Yirmibes and Miao Zehao.

As will be clear from both *The Opening of Hegel's Logic* and this study, my interpretation of the *Logic* is indebted in manifold ways to the work of other Hegel scholars. I should like to thank the following in particular for the

encouragement, assistance and sometimes much needed challenges that they provided during the genesis of this study – possibly in ways of which they are unaware – both through their published work and through conversation: Michela Bordignon, Brady Bowman, Paolo Diego Bubbio, John Burbidge, Karin de Boer, Alfredo Ferrarin, Max Gottschlich, Dietmar Heidemann, Anton Friedrich Koch, Christian Martin, Angelica Nuzzo, Robert Pippin, Paul Redding, Friederike Schick, Sally Sedgwick, Sebastian Stein, Pirmin Stekeler, Robert Stern, Richard Winfield and Michael Wolff.

Much of this study was written while I was the recipient of a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship from 2011 to 2014. I am enormously grateful to The Leverhulme Trust for supporting what must have seemed a deeply obscure project. This study would certainly not have seen the light of day without their extraordinary generosity. I am also very grateful to the University of Warwick for granting me research leave in 2018-19 to continue work on this study.

Heartfelt thanks are due, too, to my family. To my dear wife, Mary, for her loving support, unending patience and boundless good humour throughout this project. And to our children, Mark, Michael, Margaret and Christopher, to Sarah, Tom and Jenny, and to our wonderful grandchildren, Michael, Lily and Georgia, for constantly reminding me that there is a great world of joy to be found beyond the confines of Hegel's *Logic*. I do not know whether Michael, Lily or Georgia will ever discover the profound wonders of Hegel's *Logic* or if they will ever read *Hegel on Being*; but if they do decide to read some of the latter in later life, they can finally discover what Grandpa was actually doing when he said he was "working".

Kenilworth
February 2021

NOTE ON THE TEXTS

The first edition of the *Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*) was published in three volumes: “Being” (*Das Sein*) in 1812, “The Doctrine of Essence” (*Die Lehre vom Wesen*) in 1813, and “The Doctrine of the Concept” (*Die Lehre vom Begriff*) in 1816. A second, expanded and revised, edition of the first volume, entitled “The Doctrine of Being” (*Die Lehre vom Sein*), was then published in 1832, after Hegel’s death. The single volume English translations by di Giovanni (SL) and Miller (SLM) combine the *second* edition of the doctrine of being with the first (and only) editions of the doctrines of essence and the concept. The present study also focuses on the second (1832) edition of the doctrine of being (LS), though reference is occasionally made in the notes to the first (1812) edition (WLS).

The so-called *Encyclopaedia Logic* (*Die Wissenschaft der Logik*) (EL) is the first volume of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*). This was published in three editions: 1817, 1827 and 1830. The edition used in this study is the 1830 edition.

Hegel gave lectures on logic in Berlin every summer semester between his arrival there in autumn 1818 and his death in autumn 1831. These lectures were based on the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. A transcript of Hegel’s last lectures in the summer of 1831, made by Hegel’s son Karl, has been published as G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Logik. Berlin 1831. Nachgeschrieben von Karl Hegel*, ed. U. Rameil (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2001) (LL), and this has been translated in: G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on Logic. Berlin, 1831. Transcribed by Karl Hegel*, trans. C. Butler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008) (also LL). I have occasionally made reference to these lectures in this study.

A more detailed account of the different versions of Hegel’s logic can be found in Houlgate (2006), xvii-xix.

NOTE ON REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

References to works by Kant, Hegel and Schelling are provided in the main body of the text (unless they are particularly long or would otherwise clutter the text, in which case they are provided in the notes). Other references are provided in the notes. Where a single-volume English translation corresponds to a single-volume German original, I have used one abbreviation for both texts (e.g. EL, LL, PS). In the case of SL, however, a single-volume English translation corresponds to three different German texts, and in the case of LHP a three-volume English translation corresponds to a four-volume original, so I have used different abbreviations for the English and German texts. References to Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* are thus given in the form: EL 45 / 67 [§ 19] (or EN 28 / 41 [§ 253]), whereas references to the *Science of Logic* are given in the form: SL 59 / LS 71 (or SL 337 / LW 3). In all cases the English translation is cited first, followed by the German text. Where necessary, line numbers are provided after the page number.

In references to the *Encyclopaedia*, “§ 19” refers to the paragraph number, “R” to the Remark, and “A” to the Addition. (The paragraphs and remarks are by Hegel, but the additions were compiled by later editors on the basis of student transcripts of Hegel's lectures.) References to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are given in the usual form (citing the A and / or B editions): CPR A 19 / B 33.

Note that in all cases in which several page numbers are cited in one reference, I have given them in numerical order, even though this may not match the order of the passages referred to. Note, too, that at certain points in the text I have identified sub-divisions of the *Science of Logic* by using Hegel's system of numbers and letters. So, for example, 1.1.1.C.1 refers to Book 1

(Doctrine of Being), Section 1 (Quality), chapter 1 (Being), sub-section C (Becoming), sub-sub-section 1 (Unity of Being and Nothing) (see SL 59 / LS 72). Cross-references to other parts of *Hegel on Being* are given in the form: 1: 71-2 (for volume 1) or 2: 330-1 (for volume 2).

Finally, note that I have occasionally altered translations, but I have not indicated in each case that such an alteration has been made. Where this makes the relevant passage hard to find in the English translation, I have cited the unaltered English version in a note or provided line numbers. In the case of di Giovanni's translation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* – which is the principal one used in this study – I have sometimes altered this translation myself and sometimes done so by drawing on Miller's translation (SLM). Where no published English translation of a French, German or Latin text is cited, the translation is my own.

ABBREVIATIONS

KANT

- CJ Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. P. Guyer, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- CJ Kant, Immanuel, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, ed. H.F. Klemme (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2009).
- CPR Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A.W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- CPR Kant, Immanuel, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. R. Schmidt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1990).
- JL Kant, Immanuel, “The Jäsche Logic”, in Kant, *Lectures on Logic*, trans. J.M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- JL Kant, Immanuel, “Logik. Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen”, in *Kants Werke. Akademie-Textausgabe. Band IX: Logik, Physische Geographie, Pädagogik* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968).
- MF Kant, Immanuel, “Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science”, in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, ed. H. Allison and P. Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- MF Kant, Immanuel, “Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft”, in Kant, *Schriften zur Naturphilosophie*, ed. W. Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968).
- NF Kant, Immanuel, *Notes and Fragments*, ed. P. Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

- P** Kant, Immanuel, *Prolegomena to any future Metaphysics that will be able to come forward as Science*, in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, ed. H. Allison and P. Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- P** Kant, Immanuel, *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*, ed. K. Vorländer (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1976).
- WRP** Kant, Immanuel, “What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?”, in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, ed. H. Allison and P. Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- WRP** Kant, Immanuel, “Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolffs Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat?”, in Kant, *Schriften zur Metaphysik und Logik*, ed. W. Weischedel, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968).

HEGEL

- EL** Hegel, G.W.F., *The Encyclopaedia Logic (with the Zusätze). Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991).
- EL** Hegel, G.W.F., *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830), Erster Teil: Die Wissenschaft der Logik. Mit den mündlichen Zusätzen*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 8 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970).
- EN** Hegel, G.W.F., *Philosophy of Nature. Being Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).
- EN** Hegel, G.W.F., *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830), Zweiter Teil: Die Naturphilosophie. Mit den mündlichen Zusätzen*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 9 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970).
- EPM** Hegel, G.W.F., *Philosophy of Mind (1830) with the Zusätze*, trans. W. Wallace and A.V. Miller, revised with introduction and commentary by M.J. Inwood (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).
- EPM** Hegel, G.W.F., *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830), Dritter Teil: Die Philosophie des Geistes. Mit den mündlichen Zusätzen*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970).

- ILHP** Hegel G.W.F., *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. T.M. Knox and A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).
- LB** Hegel, G.W.F., *Wissenschaft der Logik. Zweiter Band: Die subjektive Logik oder die Lehre vom Begriff* (1816), ed. H.-J. Gawoll (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2003).
- LHP** Hegel, G.W.F., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, 1825-6*, ed. R.F. Brown, trans. R.F. Brown and J.M. Stewart, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006-9).
- LL** Hegel, G.W.F., *Lectures on Logic. Berlin, 1831. Transcribed by Karl Hegel*, trans. C. Butler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- LL** Hegel, G.W.F., *Vorlesungen über die Logik. Berlin 1831. Nachgeschrieben von Karl Hegel*, ed. U. Rameil (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2001).
- LPWH** Hegel, G.W.F., *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, with an Introduction by D. Forbes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
- LPWH** Hegel, G.W.F., *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, Band 1: Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1955).
- LS** Hegel, G.W.F., *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Teil: Die objektive Logik. Erster Band: Die Lehre vom Sein* (1832), ed. H.-J. Gawoll (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2008).
- LW** Hegel, G.W.F., *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band: Die objektive Logik. Zweites Buch: Die Lehre vom Wesen* (1813), ed. H.-J. Gawoll (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1999).
- PR** Hegel, G.W.F., *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. A.W. Wood, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- PR** Hegel, G.W.F., *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970).
- PS** Hegel, G.W.F., *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- PS** Hegel, G.W.F., *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. H.-F. Wessels and H. Clairmont (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1988).

- SL** Hegel, G.W.F., *The Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. G. di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- SLM** Hegel, G.W.F., *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999).
- VGP** Hegel, G.W.F., *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. P. Garniron and W. Jaeschke, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Felix Meiner, 1986-96).
- VGPW** Hegel, G.W.F., *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, 3 vols., *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vols. 18, 19, 20 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971).
- WLS** Hegel, G.W.F., *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band: Die objektive Logik. Erstes Buch: Das Sein* (1812), ed. H.-J. Gawoll (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1999).

SCHELLING

- AS** Schelling, F.W.J. von, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. M. Frank, 6 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).
- HMP** Schelling, F.W.J. von, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. A. Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

FREGE

- FR** *The Frege Reader*, ed. M. Beaney (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).
- GGA** Frege, Gottlob, *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, vol.1 (Jena: Hermann Pohle, 1893). [*Basic Laws of Arithmetic* 1: partial translation in *The Frege Reader*, pp. 194-223 under the title *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, volume 1.]

PART ONE

The Purpose and Method of Hegel's Logic

CHAPTER ONE

Categories, Language and Metaphysics

THE ROLE OF CATEGORIES

Hegel's *Science of Logic* is a dense and difficult work, but its aim is easily stated: to “clarify” or “purify” (*reinigen*) the basic *categories* of thought (SL 17 / LS 17). It is tempting to think that simply opening our eyes confronts us with objects. In Hegel's view, however, the matter is not that simple: opening our eyes merely lets in light and gives rise to visual sensations of colour. Strictly speaking, therefore, we do not actually see *objects* before us; all we see is a two-dimensional “plane” (*Fläche*) of colours.¹ So how do we come to experience objects? We do so, Hegel claims, by understanding what we see (and perceive through the other senses) in terms of general concepts or “categories” – a term he borrows from Aristotle and Kant (see LL 21, 34 / 25, 42). Such categories, for Hegel, include the thoughts of “something”, “quantity”, and “cause”. They make the experience of objects possible by enabling us to regard what we perceive as more than just an array of colours – as *something*, an *object*, that has a certain *magnitude* and exercises a *causal* influence on other things.²

In Hegel's view, therefore, objects are not simply given to us by the senses. We experience objects because, by means of categories, we *understand* what we see and hear to be an object. Such categories, Hegel contends, are not themselves the result of sensation but have their source in thought (though, as we shall see, their ultimate ground is the rationality in being itself).³ Our experience of objects is thus the result of cooperation between sensation and thought. Hegel's claim, however, is not that we first have sensations and then bring categories to bear on them; rather, we understand and “categorize” what we see and hear *as* we see and hear it.⁴ According to Hegel, therefore, we never have

unconceptualized sensations (at least when we are no longer very young children): we never see colours without understanding them to belong to some *object*, or to be *something* in their own right. In this sense, whenever we open our eyes, we do, indeed, “see” objects. Yet such “seeing” is not mere visual sensation, but the “concrete habit which *immediately* unites in one simple act the many determinations of sensation, consciousness, intuition, understanding, etc.” (EPM 132 / 186 [§ 410 R]).⁵

For Hegel, thought and its categories inform all our sensing and perceiving (and, indeed, our imagining and desiring). This, he claims, is what distinguishes human beings from other animals.⁶ Non-human animals, we are told, remain immersed in unconceptualized sensations: they feel specific pleasures and pains and associate these with what they see, but they do not think of what they see as an *object* with qualities, magnitude, form and so on.⁷ In the human being, by contrast, what Hegel calls “the logical” (*das Logische*) – thought and its categories – “permeates all his natural behavior, his ways of sensing, intuiting, desiring, his needs and impulses; and it thereby makes them into something truly human” (SL 12 / LS 10). All human experience (beyond that of the very young) is thus mediated by categories.⁸

Hegel notes that the categories or “forms of thought [*Denkformen*] are first set out and stored in human *language*” (SL 12 / LS 9-10). They are given implicit or explicit expression in words; or, as Hegel puts it in his philosophy of spirit, “it is in names that we *think*” (EPM 199 / 278 [§ 462 R]). Categories thus inform and permeate our sensing and imagining insofar as language informs them. As Hegel writes,

In all that becomes something inward for the human being, or a representation as such, in whatever he makes his own, language has penetrated, and everything that he transforms into language and expresses in it contains a category [*Kategorie*], whether concealed, mixed, or well defined. So much is the logical natural to the human being, or rather it is his very *nature* itself.

—SL 12 / LS 10

Language, however, is something we have to learn. Before we learn it, when we are still very young, we are thus immersed, much like non-human animals, in sensations that are as yet unconceptualized. Instead of experiencing identifiable objects, therefore, “initially the child has only a sensation of light by which things are manifest to it” (EPM 56 / 80 [§ 396 A]). As we learn language, thought and its categories then gradually come to inform our whole consciousness; and, Hegel notes, explicit “instruction in grammar” also draws the attention of children to “distinctions of thought” (EL 59 / 85 [§ 24 A2]).⁹ In this way, although it is not initially true, it *comes* to be true of human beings that they never have unconceptualized sensations.¹⁰

Moreover, as our command of language improves, so the range of categories that permeate our consciousness increases. Individuals at different stages of linguistic development will thus understand the world in subtly different ways. Hegel also believes that whole languages can give expression to basic categories to different degrees and may not express certain categories at all (at least before certain points in their history), so different peoples and civilisations can understand the world in subtly different ways, too. “It is to the advantage of a language”, Hegel writes, “when it possesses a wealth of logical expressions, that is, specific and separate expressions for the thought determinations themselves”, and in certain languages “many of the prepositions and articles already pertain to relations based on thought”; “the Chinese language”, however, “has apparently not developed to this stage at all, or only to an inadequate extent” (SL 12 / LS 10). Whether this supposition about Chinese is correct, I cannot say; but Hegel’s remark confirms that, in his view, speakers of different languages can experience the world through different categories (or through the same categories conceived in different ways).¹¹

For Immanuel Kant, the twelve categories listed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 2nd edn 1787) are the *universal* conditions of the objects of experience (though they must be “awakened into exercise” by experience itself) (see CPR B 1, 106, 195-7). For Hegel, by contrast, while the experience of objects necessarily presupposes categories, it does not presuppose that all people and peoples employ precisely the same ones or understand the ones they share in precisely the same way. Furthermore, Hegel thinks that in the course of history human beings can change the categories they employ. Indeed, he claims, “all revolutions, in the sciences no less than in world history, originate solely from the fact that spirit [. . .] has changed its categories, comprehending itself more truly, more deeply, more intimately, and more in unity with itself” (EN 11 / 20-1 [§ 246 A]). As an example of what he has in mind, Hegel maintains in the *Logic* that in early nineteenth-century physics, “where the predominant category previously was that of *force*, it is the category of *polarity* that now plays the most significant role” (SL 13 / LS 11).¹² In contrast to Kant, therefore, Hegel does not consider the categories of thought to be straightforwardly universal. He believes, rather, that “the advance of culture in general and of the sciences in particular [. . .] gradually fosters the rise of thought-relations [*Denkverhältnisse*] that are also more advanced, or it at least raises them to wider universality and consequently brings them to greater notice” (SL 13 / LS 11).¹³

Categories, such as “force” and “polarity”, are understood by Hegel to belong principally, though not exclusively, to natural science. Many others, however, find expression and employment primarily in everyday language. As noted above, for example, Hegel thinks that categories are expressed – at least implicitly – in certain languages by common “prepositions and articles”. (Later

we will see the important role that the prepositions *in* (in or within), *an* (in or at) and *für* (for) play in Hegel's own account of the categories of *Insichsein* (being-within-itself), *Ansichsein* (being-in-itself) and *Fürsichsein* (being-for-itself).¹⁴ Hegel also points out that categories are expressed in many languages by everyday nouns and verbs. Indeed, he thinks that this is the more important way for categories to be expressed, for they are thereby made more explicit or "stamped into objective form" (SL 12 / LS 10). The category of *being*, for example, finds expression in the verb "to be", in particular in the copula of sentences: as Hegel notes, "categories, like *being*, or *singularity*, are already mingled into every sentence, even when it has a completely sensuous content: 'This leaf *is* green'" (EL 27 / 45 [§ 3 R]).

Examples such as this show that categories are not just the preserve of philosophers and scientists, but inform everything we say in everyday life: they are, as Hegel puts it, "always on our lips" (*immer im Munde*) (EL 59 / 85 [§ 24 A2]). This is the case whatever language we speak, for all human consciousness is informed by categories, if not always in the same way. Categories are expressed in the words and sentences of all speakers of all languages.

Yet for the most part speakers are not aware that their words and sentences give expression to categories. Their employment of categories is thus largely unconscious and instinctive and constitutes a merely "natural logic" in human consciousness (SL 15-17, 19 / LS 14-17, 19). Since categories are, in the main, employed "instinctively", we do not usually reflect on them or consider whether we are employing them properly. Indeed, we are so familiar with the words in which they are expressed that we take them for granted without further ado: "*Being*, for example, is a pure thought-determination; but it never occurs to us to make 'is' the subject matter of our inquiry" (EL 59 / 85 [§ 24 A2]).¹⁵ As a consequence, Hegel claims, most people do not have a clear understanding of the categories that inform and guide their consciousness. What is intimately "*familiar*" (*bekannt*) to us – the categories or the words that express them – is thus, for the most part, not something "*known*" (*erkannt*) (SL 13 / LS 11; see also PS 18 / 25.). Indeed, it is usually "what is most unknown" (or "unfamiliar") (*das Unbekannteste*) – what we are least conscious of and least disposed to think about.¹⁶

In Hegel's view, however, if we do not understand the categories properly, we are at their mercy and so, to a greater or lesser degree, unfree, or we risk exposing ourselves to "deception" (*Täuschung*).¹⁷ For much of the time, the largely unconscious categories in our language help us navigate through everyday life successfully. Yet they can also lead us to misunderstand in various ways the very world they open up for us: for they can make us think, for example, that things are more independent of one another, or on the contrary more subject to external causation, than they are. We can see this deception, however, only when our categories have been conceived properly; and this,

Hegel contends, occurs in his *science of logic*. The aim of such logic is thus not to reveal an “Absolute” altogether beyond our experience, but to “clarify” (or “purify”), and so to prevent our being deceived by, the categories that are “always on our lips”. The task of Hegel’s logic is thereby also to raise us to greater freedom: for in such logic our thought is guided by the categories no longer just instinctively but “consciously” (*mit Bewußtsein*), and so is what Hegel calls “intelligent and free activity” which “*knows itself*” to be what it is (SL 17 / LS 16-17).

METAPHYSICS, EMPIRICISM AND THEIR PRESUPPOSITIONS

Hegel believes that in much other Western philosophy categories also guide thought with more than just “instinct”: they are consciously distinguished from other representations and then used to understand the world. He is particularly interested in the way they are employed in *metaphysics* before the latter is subjected to critique by Kant. In Hegel’s work the term “metaphysics” sometimes refers to the set of categories that informs any consciousness, whether philosophical or non-philosophical: “the diamond net into which everything is brought and thereby first made intelligible” (EN 11 / 20 [§ 246 A]). Yet it is also the name he attaches to a central strand of pre-Kantian philosophy in which categories are employed. In such philosophical “metaphysics” Hegel includes mediaeval Scholasticism, as well as the early modern rationalism of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz (or, rather, core aspects of such rationalism) – though, in his view, the most developed, if not most insightful, form of metaphysics is found in the writings of Christian Wolff, who divided the subject into general metaphysics (or ontology) and special metaphysics (which encompasses cosmology, rational psychology and natural theology).¹⁸

Since philosophy is a reflective discipline, one might expect metaphysicians, such as Wolff, to consider explicitly how best to understand the categories of thought before employing them. Yet Hegel claims that in pre-Kantian metaphysics, as in everyday life, categories are employed without – or at least without adequate – consideration of whether they are being conceived properly (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28 and R]); this is in spite of the fact that they are used in metaphysics with a certain “consciousness”. For this reason, Hegel maintains, metaphysics “incurred the just reproach that it employed the pure forms of thought” – the categories – “*uncritically*” (*ohne Kritik*) (SL 42 / LS 50-1). Metaphysics sets itself apart from everyday, non-philosophical thinking by seeking a rational, systematic understanding of reality; from Hegel’s perspective, however, it is in fact an “uncritical thinking along [*unkritisches Dahindenken*], of the kind that anyone can do” (EL 82 / 115 [§ 41 A1]). Hegel does not deny that there is debate among metaphysicians about fundamental categories, such

as substance, and how they should best be understood. Yet he thinks that, despite such debate, many features of these categories – and, indeed, of thought as such – are taken for granted by metaphysics without question.

As Hegel understands it, pre-Kantian metaphysics seeks to comprehend what it takes to be objects of pure reason (rather than the senses), namely “the *soul*, the *world*, *God*” (EL 68 / 97 [§ 30]).¹⁹ It starts from a general conception or “representation” (*Vorstellung*) of the latter and then endeavours to determine their nature more precisely through reason alone. Metaphysics carries out its self-appointed task by predicating categories of the objects of reason and so claiming, for example, that the world is “finite” or “infinite” and that the soul is “simple” (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28 and R]). Such claims may be supported by prior arguments or be the premises of further arguments themselves. Either way, in Hegel’s view, the metaphysical manner of thinking is uncritical, because in proceeding as it does it takes two related ideas for granted without further reflection. It presupposes, first, “that cognition of the Absolute could come about through *attributing predicates to it*” in judgements, and, second, that categories or concepts, such as “finite” and “infinite”, or “simple” and “composite”, when taken as distinct from – indeed, in opposition to – one another, can themselves be understood as “*predicates of what is true*”. That is to say, metaphysics takes it for granted that knowledge of objects of reason can be expressed in *judgements* in which *distinct* categories serve as predicates, and there was “no investigation of whether predicates of this kind are something true in and for themselves, nor of whether the form of the judgment could be the form of truth” (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28 and R]). One may wonder how it is possible to think without making judgements about things; yet unless it can be shown why thought must involve judgement, the claim *that* it does so will remain a mere assumption. This is the case, in Hegel’s view, in pre-Kantian metaphysics.

Metaphysics also assumes that any judgement it makes, such as that the soul is simple or the world is finite, is either true or false. In the same vein it assumes that “of *two opposed assertions* [. . .] one must be *true*, and the other *false*” (EL 69 / 98 [§ 32]); thus, if it is true that the world is finite, it is false that it is infinite. This assumption rests on a further assumption about categories, namely that opposed categories are indeed simply *opposed* to one another. Metaphysicians may disagree about the exact meaning of the terms “finite” and “infinite”, but, according to Hegel, they agree that being finite is the opposite of being infinite, just as being simple is the opposite of being composite. It is for this reason that it must be false to say that the world is infinite if it is true that it is finite. For metaphysics, therefore, the world is either one or the other; it cannot be both at the same time and in the same respect, because the two categories concerned exclude one another.

This conception of categories, and the “either / or” thinking that it grounds, is named by Hegel “*dogmatism*”. Dogmatism, for him, thus consists, not just in

refusing to revise one's judgements, but in taking opposed categories to be definitively opposed to one another (EL 69 / 98 [§ 32]). Such dogmatism, in Hegel's view, is characteristic of what (following Kant) he calls the "understanding" (*Verstand*). "Thinking as *understanding*", he maintains, "stops short at the fixed [*fest*] determinacy and its distinctness vis-à-vis other determinacies"; that is, it takes such "determinacies" or categories to stand over against their opposites and so, in each case, to constitute one side of an opposition (EL 125 / 169 [§ 80]). It thus holds them to be essentially *one-sided*, finite determinations of thought, each of which begins only where its opposite stops. For the understanding, therefore, each category is simply what it is and is definitely *not* its opposite.

Understanding, in Hegel's view, governs much of everyday life and, indeed, is essential to it, since it enables us to have "definite purposes", to make clear decisions and to grasp objects in their "determinacy" (EL 126-7 / 170 [§ 80 A]). Everyday life, however, is also permeated by an awareness of the dialectic through which opposites turn into one another (for example, in "familiar proverbs" such as "pride goes before a fall") and of the "speculative" unity of opposites (for example, in religion).²⁰ Metaphysics, by contrast, is governed more thoroughly by understanding: it is "the way in which the *mere understanding* views the objects of reason" (EL 65 / 93 [§ 27]). It takes what Hegel calls the "totalities" of the soul, world and God and understands them to be either simple *or* composite, either finite *or* infinite, and so on (EL 68-9 / 97-8 [§§ 30, 32]). Metaphysical understanding can, of course, attribute both opposing predicates to its object under a certain condition: it can judge the object to be finite in this respect and infinite in that respect. Yet it must still judge these two respects to be opposed to one another, and so remains tied to oppositional "either / or" thinking even in this case.

Understanding assumes that opposed categories are simply opposed, because it assumes that each category simply *is* what it *is* and is *not* what it is *not*. That is to say, understanding is governed by the principle of *identity*: A is A.²¹ The corollary of this principle is the principle of contradiction (or non-contradiction): A is not not-A (see SL 18 / LS 18). These two principles thus constitute the founding assumptions of pre-Kantian metaphysics, as Hegel understands it. They are mere *assumptions* because metaphysics is unable to prove them but simply takes them for granted. In Hegel's view, proving these principles would require demonstrating their necessity by deriving them from the very nature of thought; metaphysics, however, provides no such derivation.²²

Christian Wolff, whom Hegel regards as the quintessential metaphysician, tries to avoid just taking the principle of non-contradiction for granted, and he does so (paradoxically for a rationalist) by basing the principle on *experience*. As he writes in his *First Philosophy or Ontology* (1730), "we experience this as the nature of our mind: that while it judges that something is, it cannot judge

at the same time that the same thing is not". He goes on to insist that this experience is "evident" (*obvia*) to anyone who is conscious of himself; indeed, he claims, anyone who does not see this will be counted among the mad or the intentionally foolish "with whom we have nothing to do" (a sentiment echoed just over a century and a half later by Frege).²³ As Hegel reminds us, however, both Hume and Kant argue that experience cannot show the *necessity* of any principle or concept (see EL 80-1 / 111-13 [§§ 39-40]). Wolff's attempt to avoid taking the principle of non-contradiction for granted thus brings him no closer to proving the principle. All he can do is assert, insist, and so ultimately *assume* as self-evident, that we cannot judge something to be A and not to be A at the same time and in the same respect.

The principle of non-contradiction seems so obvious that it is hard to see how one could think without it. According to Hegel, however, it is never proven or derived by metaphysics, but is simply taken for granted "uncritically". Furthermore, there is a problem with the principle, of which metaphysicians for the most part are not fully aware, namely that thinking in conformity with it actually produces the very contradiction it is meant to hold at bay. The easiest way to see what Hegel has in mind is to consider the categories of the finite and the infinite.

If we consider these categories according to the principle of non-contradiction, then the finite is clearly *not* the infinite and the infinite is *not* the finite. To be finite, as the term implies, is to come to an *end*, to have a limit and at that limit to stop being what one is; to be infinite is thus to have no end or limit. The problem, however, is this: if the finite is not the infinite and the infinite is not the finite, then the infinite has its own limit and stops being what it is at the point at which the finite starts. This then turns the infinite itself into something *finite* and so violates the principle of non-contradiction, according to which A is definitely *not* not-A, is *not* its own negation. In Hegel's (reported) words: "here infinity is sharply contrasted with finitude, yet it is easy to see that if the two are set against one another, then infinity [. . .] is limited by the finite. But a limited infinity is itself only something finite".²⁴

The process through which a category such as infinity turns into its opposite is called by Hegel "dialectic". "The *dialectical* moment", he writes, "is the self-sublation [*Sichaufheben*] of these finite determinations on their own part, and their passing into their opposites" (EL 128 / 172 [§ 81]). We shall learn more about such dialectic later when we examine Hegel's *Logic* in detail, and we shall see that it is generated, ultimately, by the categories of thought themselves, rather than the way in which *we* conceive them (see SL 33 / LS 39). At this point, however, it is important to note that a dialectic is also generated by our understanding and its principle of non-contradiction: for the transition of the category of infinity *into* its opposite is brought about by thinking of it as opposed to finitude in the first place. This dialectic is thus not imposed on the

understanding from the outside, but belongs to, though is mostly unknown to, understanding itself. (One philosopher who is aware of this dialectic, in Hegel's view, is Plato: for, in the *Parmenides* dialogue and elsewhere, Plato aims specifically "at dissolving and refuting limited assertions through themselves" [SL 34-5 / LS 40].)²⁵

As we shall see, Hegel not only demonstrates in his logic that categories pass into one another dialectically – of their own accord – but he also shows that, and how, they are to be thought together as a unity. This, he says, is the "speculative" moment in philosophical thought. Speculative thought, for Hegel, does not "speculate" in the ordinary sense: it does not put forward daring theses about the world that have no proper foundation. Rather, "the *speculative* or *positively rational* apprehends the unity of the determinations in their opposition, the *affirmative* that is contained in their dissolution and in their transition".²⁶ When we turn to examine Hegel's derivation of specific categories, we shall see in more detail exactly what he understands the "speculative" unity of opposites to entail. We should note here, however, that he thinks many pre-Kantian philosophers – starting with Heraclitus – have shared his speculative insight into the "unity of opposed determinations" (LHP 2: 73-4 / VGP 2: 71-2). Not all philosophy before Kant, therefore, can be equated with *metaphysics*, as Hegel conceives it, that is, with the philosophy of "*mere understanding*" (EL 65 / 93 [§ 27]).

In Hegel's view, Plato and Aristotle were the first to make the "forms of thought" the explicit "object of consideration for themselves", and Aristotle in particular deserves praise for having "pinpointed [*fixiert*] these forms, this fine thread permeating all", and having "brought this to consciousness" in his works on logic.²⁷ In doing so, however, Aristotle remained firmly within the limits of the understanding, which is governed by the principles of identity and non-contradiction, and he thereby laid the foundation for subsequent formal logic (and metaphysics) (LHP 2: 260-1 / VGP 3: 96-7). At the same time, Hegel insists, Aristotle's thinking about the natural world and the human soul did not proceed in strict accordance with these principles of the understanding, but "he treated speculatively everything he observed" (LL 4 / 6). Aristotelian "virtue", for example, consists in the "unity of the rational side with the irrational side" of the soul, that is, in the unity of reason and inclination (LHP 2: 255 / VGP 3: 92); his conception of *nous* as the unity of thinking and what is thinkable is "what is absolutely speculative" (LHP 2: 254 / VGP 3: 91); and, as we shall see (1: 363), Hegel attributes to Aristotle "truly speculative concepts of space, time, and motion" (SL 164 / LS 208). Like Plato the dialectician, therefore, Aristotle is not to be regarded as a straightforwardly metaphysical philosopher, "although people usually believe the contrary" (EL 76 / 106 [§ 36 A]).

The same can be said, Hegel maintains, of Spinoza: his thought also combines metaphysical with speculative elements. Spinoza is clearly a metaphysical

thinker in Hegel's sense, insofar as he distinguishes sharply between *being* and *non-being* (and so follows Parmenides) (see SL 61, 71 / LS 74, 87). As Spinoza writes in the *Ethics* (1677), God is substance that is "absolutely infinite", and "if something is absolutely infinite, whatever expresses essence and *involves no negation* pertains to its essence". Substance is in turn *being* that is "conceived through itself"; so God, for Spinoza, is being without negation.²⁸ Furthermore, Spinoza draws a clear distinction between being and negation in the case of finite things, too. In his view, the finite, as *finite*, is subject to negation, insofar as it is (or can be) *limited* by something else of the same nature;²⁹ yet he insists that the being or essence of such things is itself free of negation.

First, Spinoza declares that the figure, or manner of "determination", of finite bodies is a "negation and not anything positive" – that "determination is negation" – and he concludes that this determination "therefore does not pertain to the thing in regard to its being". The figure or determinacy of a thing, and with it negation, are thereby kept apart from the thing's being.³⁰ Second, Spinoza maintains that there is nothing in the definition of a finite thing that could cause it not to be. As he writes, "the definition of any thing affirms, and *does not deny*, the thing's essence"; the essence is itself that through which the thing is what it is; the definition thus affirms what it is to *be* the thing and contains nothing that would negate or "deny" that being. Accordingly, while we attend only to the thing itself and its essence, "we shall not be able to find anything in it which can destroy it", which means in turn that a finite thing can only be deprived of being or existence by something else.³¹

In separating being and negation in these ways, Spinoza proves himself to be a metaphysician in Hegel's sense, namely a thinker wedded to the oppositions of the understanding and the principle of identity (see SL 61 / LS 74). In other respects, however, Spinoza strikes Hegel as a speculative, rather than a metaphysical, thinker. Hegel draws attention in particular to Spinoza's concept of "causa sui" or cause-of-itself, in which the usual opposition between "cause" and "effect" is overcome.³² This concept, Hegel maintains, "is a wholly speculative concept", and he explains why this is as follows:

A cause produces an effect that is something other than the cause. A cause of *itself* is a cause that produces an effect, but in this case the distinction is sublated [*aufgehoben*], for a cause of itself produces only itself. This is a fundamental concept in all that is speculative – return into self in the other.

—LHP 3: 122-3 / VGP 4: 106, emphasis added

The concept of cause does not emerge in Hegel's *Logic* until the doctrine of essence, and so is not one we will consider in this study. We will thus not be able to determine just how speculative in the final analysis Hegel takes Spinoza's thought to be. We have seen enough, however, to know that, although Spinoza

falls within the period of pre-Kantian metaphysics, he is not a pure metaphysician in Hegel's eyes.

Indeed, when one examines Hegel's remarks about early modern philosophy as a whole in his lectures on the history of philosophy, it appears that he takes only Christian Wolff (among the rationalists) to be a purely metaphysical philosopher. Wolff's philosophy, Hegel contends, is "in general a philosophy of the understanding [*Verstandesphilosophie*] as extended to all objects that fall within the realm of knowledge" (LHP 3: 157 / VGP 4: 138). It systematizes Leibniz's thought, aspects of which Hegel praises, yet it does so in such a way "that in it the speculative has completely disappeared" (VGPW 3: 258).³³ For Hegel, therefore, all we find in Wolff's theoretical writings is "the dogmatism of the metaphysics of the understanding" in which "the absolute and rational is determined through mutually exclusive determinations and relations of the understanding, such as one and many, or simplicity and composition, finite and infinite, the causal relation, and so on" (VGPW 3: 260). Whether these last lines provide an accurate picture of Wolff's thought I leave to others to judge. It is clear, however, that they give an accurate picture of "uncritical" pre-Kantian metaphysics, as *Hegel* conceives of it.³⁴

In contrast to such metaphysics, in Hegel's view, *empiricism* does not begin with logical definitions of concepts and then justify its judgements through rational deduction (in the manner of Spinoza and Wolff), but it bases knowledge on sensuous experience.³⁵ For an empiricist, such as Locke, Hegel claims, knowledge arises solely through "elevat[ing] the content that belongs to perception, feeling, and intuition into the *form of universal notions, principles, and laws*, etc." (EL 77 / 108 [§ 38]). These principles and laws are thus not innate, or the products of pure reason or understanding, but they are derived from and justified by empirical experience alone. Hegel maintains, however, that there is a "fundamental deception" (*Grundtäuschung*) in such empiricism: for, in the very process of giving an *empirical* account of knowledge and the world, it presupposes, and makes surreptitious use of, "the metaphysical categories of matter, force, as well as those of one, many, universality, and the infinite, etc., and it goes on to draw *conclusions*, guided by categories of this sort, presupposing and applying the forms of syllogising in the process" (EL 77-8 / 108 [§ 38 R]).³⁶ Locke, for example, presupposes the metaphysical concept of "simplicity" – employed by both Descartes and Leibniz – in his account of the empirical, sensuous origin of what he calls our "ideas": for he claims that such ideas "enter by the Senses simple and unmixed", even though, by his own admission, "Sight and Touch often take in from the same Object, *at the same time*, different *Ideas*".³⁷ In this respect, Hegel contends, empiricism remains deeply mired in the metaphysics it opposes (see EL 77-8 / 108-9 [§ 38 R]).

David Hume later radicalizes empiricism by observing – "correctly", in Hegel's view – that sense perception can provide no warrant for the thought of

a universal and necessary connection, that is, for the principle or category of causality (and the judgements in which the latter is employed) (EL 80 / 111 [§ 39]).³⁸ For Hume, we see *this* happen and then *that*, but “we perceive neither cause nor effect” (LL 29 / 36). In this sense, Hume has a more sceptical attitude towards a category that is central to metaphysics – causality – than does Locke, who claims without hesitation that qualities in things “affect” our sense organs and thereby produce ideas in us through their “Powers”.³⁹

Yet, for Hegel, Hume is still wedded to metaphysics, since he “leaves thinking” – as opposed to perception – “with abstraction only, with formal universality and identity” (EL 77 / 108 [§ 38 R]). In his *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748) Hume famously distinguishes “Matters of Fact”, which are based on “the present testimony of our senses or the records of our memory”, from “Relations of Ideas”, which concern quantity and number and are “discoverable by the mere operation of thought”. Such relations, he tells us, consist in the “equality or inequality” between the parts of quantity and number, and so rest, ultimately, on the principles of *identity* and *non-contradiction*.⁴⁰ Hume is thus by no means as sceptical of metaphysics as he could be: for, though he professes to be a consistent empiricist, his conception of *thought* coincides in important ways with that of the arch-metaphysician, Christian Wolff.

According to Hegel, therefore, empiricism is more closely tied to metaphysical thinking than its advocates realize. It proceeds “without knowing that it thereby itself contains metaphysics and is engaged in it, and that it is using those categories and their connections in a totally uncritical and unconscious manner” (EL 78 / 109 [§ 38 R]). In the preface to the second edition of the *Logic* Hegel levels a similar charge against those who are critical of his own speculative philosophy. He does not there address specific arguments of his opponents, but he objects to the fact that “their opinions and objections contain categories which are presuppositions and themselves in need of being criticized first before they are put to use” (SL 20 / LS 20-1).

Such presuppositions, Hegel tells us, include the assertions that “infinity is different from finitude, content something else than form, the inner something else than the outer, likewise that mediation is not immediacy” (SL 21 / LS 21-2). His critics thus accuse him of failing to respect what they take to be fundamental distinctions and oppositions between categories. Note, however, that Hegel does not criticize his critics in turn just for making such distinctions; we will see further on that the latter are not erased by speculative philosophy, but are preserved – albeit in a qualified form – in the very idea of the “unity of opposites”.⁴¹ His criticism of his critics is that they simply *assume* such distinctions to be definitive, in an unreflective and uncritical manner, and do not take the trouble to discover whether they are definitive. His critics fail to see that it is illegitimate simply “to presuppose and straight away accept” such

distinctions, and that “the requirement and the business of logical thinking is to investigate precisely whether such a finite without infinity is something true” (SL 21 / LS 22). Hegel makes a similar criticism of everyday consciousness and of metaphysics. The former uses categories unconsciously and instinctively, whereas the latter employs them consciously to comprehend the objects of reason (and is tied more closely to understanding than is everyday consciousness [see 1: 9]); but both take their categories for granted *uncritically* without further ado.⁴²

In Hegel’s view, such uncritical taking-for-granted is problematic because it conflicts with Kant’s insistence at the end of the eighteenth century on the need for a *critique* of reason, and also with the principle of *freedom* that informs modern philosophy and the modern age more generally.⁴³ This latter principle, we are told, has its source in the Reformation and implicitly underlies the thought of the founder of modern philosophy, René Descartes. In the modern period, Hegel maintains, “what has to be acknowledged is thinking freely on its own account, and this can happen only through my thinking freely within myself”. Accordingly, human beings must now scrutinize their thought and set aside whatever rests on “sheer authority” rather than freedom, including the authority of the understanding and of mere *assumption* as such. In philosophy, therefore, as Hegel puts it, “we must renounce every presupposition and prejudice”, “since every presupposition is something found already there that thinking has not posited” (LHP 3: 104, 108-9 / VGP 4: 88, 92-3). This directive, of course, is the principle that guides Descartes; for Hegel, Descartes’ insistence that we must doubt and set aside all our assumptions is thus a clear expression of modern freedom, even though he does not explicitly emphasize freedom in his work (LHP 3: 109 / VPG 4: 93).⁴⁴

Hegel notes, however, that Descartes does not adhere consistently to this principle but makes assumptions of his own. At one point in the *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), for example, Descartes turns to consider “*substance, duration, order*”, but, in Hegel’s view, the definitions he provides of them are simply those he *finds* – that is, assumes – to be true. As Hegel puts it, therefore, Descartes “lays down as the basic principle that nothing must be assumed”, but “the differentiated content or the representations to which he passes on at this point he still takes up as something found [*ein Gefundenes*] within our consciousness” (LHP 3: 114 / VGP 4: 98).⁴⁵ There are also unexplained assumptions in the *Meditations* (1641). In the third Meditation, for example, Descartes asserts that “there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause”, while telling us only that “it is manifest by the natural light” that this is so;⁴⁶ and in the second Meditation, Descartes asserts that I am “a thing that thinks” without explaining why thought should be attached to a “thing” at all. Indeed, Hegel suggests that one could even omit the “I” from thought and be left with “only thinking and being”, in which case

Descartes' argument, "I think, therefore I am", would be reduced to the much simpler "thinking, therefore 'is'" (or "*thought*, therefore *being*") – an argument that Hegel himself relies on to show that speculative logic must be ontology.⁴⁷

From a Hegelian perspective, therefore, much of Descartes' philosophy is at odds with the modern principle, which he endorses, that "one must make no presupposition" (LHP 3: 109 / VGP 4: 92). So, too, is the uncritical assumption made by other pre-Kantian metaphysicians and empiricists (and by Hegel's own critics) that categories should be conceived as the *understanding* conceives of them. Accordingly, Hegel believes, the principle of modern freedom requires us to abandon this assumption and consider anew how the categories should be conceived. Indeed, it requires us to abandon all determinate assumptions about thought and to undertake a study of the categories that is altogether *presuppositionless*.⁴⁸

The task of Hegel's *Logic* will be to undertake precisely this study. It will be a *critical* study because it will not assume in advance that we already know how categories are to be understood. In particular, it will not presuppose that opposed categories are – or are not – definitively opposed, but it will seek to discover *whether* "a finite without infinity is something true; likewise, whether such an abstracted infinity, or whether a content without form or a form without content, an inner by itself that has no expression, an externality without inwardness, whether any of this is *something true* or *something actual*" (SL 21 / LS 22). Indeed, Hegel's study may not assume from the outset that specific categories belong to thought at all, but it must start from the sheer indeterminate being of thought – the simple "is" of thinking – and seek to discover whether any categories belong to it. Those categories that do emerge in the course of Hegel's speculative logic will thus not just have been taken for granted, but will have been derived from, and so shown to be inherent in and made necessary by, thought itself. In Hegel's view, this process of deriving categories, without presupposing their form or content at the start, will also show how they are to be conceived *in truth* (and thereby "clarify" or "purify" them). It will thus disclose whether categorial "predicates" of the kind employed by metaphysics "are something true in and for themselves" and, in so doing, "whether the form of the judgment could be the form of truth" (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28 R]).⁴⁹

Note, by the way, that the fact that certain categories prove, in speculative logic, to be inherent in thought, and so necessary, does not mean that they should therefore all be equally explicit in the thought of every individual and people. As we shall see, such logic discloses the necessary categories of thought by rendering explicit what is implicit in thought, and in so doing it shows that these categories are themselves merely *implicit* at first.⁵⁰ This means, of course, that they are merely implicit at first in logic; but this idea is not incompatible with the idea that they are merely implicit at first in history and in the consciousness of individuals, too. Categories can thus prove in logic to be

inherent in thought and yet still be merely implicit in, or indeed absent from, the thought of certain historical peoples and of children in the early stages of learning language; and they can also be expressed more explicitly, yet be employed only “instinctively and unconsciously”, by ordinary, everyday consciousness (SL 19 / LS 19).

The project of Hegel’s logic – to discover anew and without prior assumptions which categories, if any, are inherent in thought – does not, therefore, render unintelligible in history and everyday life the merely implicit presence, or the absence, or the merely instinctive employment of such categories. Indeed, a major task of such logic, as Hegel conceives it, is precisely to provide a thorough, non-question-begging derivation and clarification of the categories that are employed *instinctively*, and without a clear grasp of their proper form and content, by everyday consciousness. “As impulses”, Hegel writes, “the categories do their work only instinctively; they are brought to consciousness one by one and so are variable and mutually confusing, thus affording to spirit only fragmentary and uncertain actuality”, and so, as noted above, they can deceive us about the very world they open up (see 1: 6). “To purify [*reinigen*] these categories and in them to elevate spirit [*Geist*] to freedom and truth, this is therefore the loftier business of logic” (SL 17 / LS 17). At the same time Hegel’s logic will “reconstruct” the categories and forms of reasoning that have been employed consciously by metaphysics and analysed in formal logic (SL 19 / LS 19). It will thus provide a new and presuppositionless conception of the categories and forms of reasoning whose character both ordinary consciousness and metaphysics have previously just taken for granted.

Karl Popper suspects Hegel of trying to “destroy all argument and all progress” through the “mystery method” of “*dialectics*”.⁵¹ Hegel’s real aim in the *Logic* is, however, far less sinister than Popper would have us believe. It is to undertake a thoroughly critical and open-minded study of thought, and thereby to bring us to an “educated cognition of the thought-relationships”, or categories, that permeate to varying degrees, and often unconsciously, all human experience, understanding and reasoning (EL 11 / 23 [Preface to 2nd edn]).⁵²

CHAPTER TWO

Hegel's Critique of Kant¹

THE LIMITS OF KANTIAN CRITIQUE

Hegel acknowledges that he is not the first to undertake a critical examination of thought and its categories, but that he is following in the footsteps of Kant, who carries out such an examination in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. “The *Critical Philosophy*”, Hegel writes, “subjects to investigation the validity of the *concepts of the understanding* that are used in metaphysics, but also in the other sciences and in ordinary representation”. Hegel is also clear in his praise for Kant’s critical intentions: “subjecting the determinations of the older metaphysics to investigation”, he states, “was without doubt a very important step” (EL 81 / 113-14 [§ 41 and A1]). Yet Hegel’s praise is not unqualified: for, in his view, Kant’s critical examination of the categories is not *critical* enough.

Kant’s philosophy, Hegel tells us, produced a “revolution” in Germany and constitutes “the foundation and the starting point of the new German philosophy” (LL 30 / 37; SL 40 / LS 48). His importance to Hegel is evident from the fact that there are more references to him in the *Logic* than to any other philosopher. In this chapter, however, I do not propose to examine all of those references. My aim is to consider just one issue: why, for Hegel, Kant is less of a critical philosopher than he claims to be. In later chapters I will then also look in detail at Hegel’s account of Kant’s antinomies.²

The problem with Kant, from Hegel’s point of view, is that he merely limits the “objective validity” of the categories – to objects of possible experience – but does not examine how they should be conceived in themselves.³ He does not seek to discover the true logical “content” of the categories and whether the understanding (*Verstand*) conceives of the latter correctly: “what they are in themselves [. . .], how they are determined and related to each other, this was not made a subject of consideration” (SL 41 / LS 49-50).⁴ For all his critical

intent, therefore, Kant does not challenge or criticize the way the understanding conceives of the categories. He also retains a *verständig* conception of other concepts, such as “subjective” and “objective”, or “form” and “content” (or “matter”), that are not, for him, categories in the narrow sense. And, of course, he also preserves the basic principles of formal logic (see SL 30-1 / LS 35).⁵

In Hegel’s view, the modern age is the age of freedom, but since the 1780s in particular a new “spirit” has arisen that demands a thorough revision of logic and of our basic concepts and categories (SL 7-8 / LS 3, 5). Kant, however, remains wedded to the understanding’s conception of the latter and gives no further critical thought to their logical “content” (or form). Indeed (though Hegel does not cite this passage), Kant states explicitly in the first *Critique* that it is not his task in that work to consider precisely *how* categories should be conceived. He admits that in a subsequent “system of pure reason” he would have to consider this; yet in the *Critique* itself, he writes, “I deliberately spare myself the definitions of these categories”, since “they would only distract us from the chief point of the investigation” (CPR B 108).

Kant fails, or rather declines, to provide “definitions” of the categories, because, as Hegel puts it, “the interest of the Kantian philosophy was directed to the so-called *transcendental* nature of the categories” (SL 41 / LS 49). In other words, Kant’s concern in the first *Critique* is to disclose the *source* of the categories, however they might be conceived. That source, for Kant, is thought itself, and more especially (in Hegel’s words) the “*original identity* of the ‘I’ in thinking” (EL 83 / 116 [§ 42]). Kant is led to this view by Hume’s scepticism. He accepts Hume’s conclusion that judgements claiming universality and necessity are not warranted by our sensuous perception, but he thinks that we nonetheless make such judgements and are justified in so doing. Since these judgements are not justified by perception, they and the categories they contain must have their ultimate ground in *thought*. As Hegel puts it, since the “element” of universality and necessity in judgements and categories “does not stem from the empirical as such, it belongs to the spontaneity of *thinking*, or is *a priori*” (EL 81 / 113 [§ 40]).⁶

According to Hegel, Kant goes on to argue that *a priori* categories are employed by thought to think our sensuous perceptions or intuitions as a *unity*. Such intuitions, for Kant, are “*manifold* with regard to their *content*” and “equally manifold through their form” (that is, through being dispersed in space and time) (EL 83 / 116 [§ 42]), and as such they lack intrinsic unity. The thinking “I”, however, regards this manifold of intuitions as its own, as “mine”; moreover, it understands itself to be a unity, to possess “the unity of self-consciousness”. To think of such a manifold as belonging to it, therefore, the I has to think of the manifold as falling *within* its unity; and this in turn means that it must think the manifold itself as unified. As Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopaedia*,

since the 'I' relates this manifold of sense-experience and intuiting to itself and unites it within itself as within *one* consciousness (pure apperception), this manifold is brought into an identity, into an original combination.

—EL 84 / 116 [§ 42]⁷

Kant's categories, Hegel explains, are the concepts *through which* we understand the manifold as a unity and so as able to belong to our – indeed, any – unified consciousness. In the words of the *Logic*, "it is by virtue of the categories [. . .] that the manifold of given representations is so determined as to be brought to the *unity of consciousness*" (SL 515 / LB 14); or in Kant's own words, the category is the "condition" under which alone manifold representations "*can* stand together in a universal self-consciousness", in an "I" (CPR B 132-3).

To repeat: Kantian categories, in Hegel's view, are ways of thinking of manifold intuitions as a unity, as connected to one another: "they are the connection, the positing in unity, of the manifold stuff of feeling, the stuff of intuition" (LHP 3: 177 / VGP 4: 154); or, as Kant puts it, they contain the "pure synthetic unity of the manifold in general" (CPR B 177). Categories enable us to think intuitions as united in one quantity, or as substance and accident, or as cause and effect. At the same time, Hegel notes, they are "concepts which refer *a priori* to *objects* [*Gegenstände*]"; that is, concepts through which what we perceive is understood to be an *object* – a quantity, substance or cause – rather than just a play of associated intuitions (SL 40 / LS 48).⁸ By unifying intuitions through categories and bringing them into or under the unity of its self-consciousness, therefore, the I understands those intuitions to present us with objects that have a certain magnitude and stand in causal relations to other objects.

Karl Ameriks charges Hegel with focussing too much on the idea that Kant's categories enable intuitions to belong to self-consciousness, to the I, and with neglecting the role they play in making objects of experience, and the cognition of such objects, possible.⁹ Yet Hegel is well aware that Kant's categories do double duty: they enable intuitions to belong to the unity of self-consciousness *and* to present us with empirical objects. Hegel is well aware, in other words, that (as Kant himself puts it) the "synthetic unity" thought through a category is "not merely something I myself need in order to cognize an object but rather something under which every intuition must stand *in order to become an object for me*" (CPR B 138).¹⁰

In my view, Hegel misrepresents Kant's position by claiming that, for Kant, the explicit thought of myself as an "I" accompanies all my representations – that I always think of the latter explicitly as belonging to *my* self-consciousness, to *me*.¹¹ In fact, Kant merely says that the thought of myself – what he calls the "I think" – must be *able* to accompany all my representations (CPR B 131-2). I can thus be conscious of what is before me without being explicitly conscious

of myself, though such explicit self-consciousness must always be possible. I must always be *able* to think of my representations as mine, and this possibility requires that the representations themselves be thought as a unity so that they can be brought into my, or any, self-consciousness.¹²

In other respects, however, Hegel's understanding of his predecessor is correct. He sees that, for Kant, intuitions must be thought as a unity if they are to be brought into the unity of self-consciousness (or, as Kant puts it, if they are to stand together "in a universal self-consciousness" [CPR B 132-3]), and that they must also be understood to form unities if they are to present us with objects. He also sees that, for Kant, intuitions are understood as unities through the categories (which are themselves simply determinate thoughts of unity), and that the categories in turn have their ground in the unity and spontaneity of the I. He sees, therefore, that, for Kant, it is thanks only to the *I* and its own unity – the "*transcendental* unity of self-consciousness" (CPR B 132) – that intuitions can be unified and so understood to be representations, or rather presentations, of *objects* (even though he fails to see that the Kantian I is not always explicitly conscious of itself). As Hegel puts it, "this *unity of consciousness* is", in Kant's view, "alone that which constitutes the reference of the presentations [*Vorstellungen*] to an object, hence their *objective validity*" (SL 515 / LB 14; see CPR B 137). Intuitions can present us with objects, and be brought into the unity of self-consciousness, only because the I itself thinks those intuitions as united in various ways through the categories; otherwise, intuitions would remain a pure manifold that is unintelligible and, indeed, "as good as nothing for us" (CPR A 111).

The idea that empirical experience of objects requires categories as well as intuitions is one that Hegel endorses. This is because categories, for Hegel, define what it is to be an object. In this respect, Hegel is a disciple of Kant:

This bonding of the categories with the stuff of perception is what Kant understands by 'experience'. *And that is quite correct*. There is perceiving in experience; there is stuff in it that belongs to feeling, to intuition. But this stuff is not apprehended merely according to its singularity or immediacy. To the contrary, it is posited in the very bonding with those categories (such as cause and effect).

—LHP 3: 177 / VGP 4: 154, emphasis added

Hegel also agrees with Kant that categories have their ground in *thought* – albeit with an important qualification: for Hegel, categories are rooted not just in the thinking "I", but in thought "in the absolute sense", that is, in the reason that informs both the "I" and "*the objective world*" (SL 30, 41 / LS 35, 49).

Yet despite Hegel's praise for and closeness to Kant, he does not endorse Kant's account of the *limitations* of the categories, as he understands it. Hegel's

Kant does not consider how categories should be conceived in themselves, but takes over the understanding's conception of them (see EL 81 / 113 [§ 41]). His examination of the categories is intended to be *critical*, however, because, in contrast to previous metaphysicians, he declares the categories to be limited in two senses. First, he takes them to have legitimate application to – that is, to yield knowledge of – objects of possible empirical experience only, not that which is purely intelligible. Second, he takes them to be further limited by the fact that such objects are mere “appearances”, that is, objects *for us*, rather than things in themselves. Hegel takes issue with Kant on both counts.

First, although Hegel agrees that categories are needed for experience of empirical objects, he does not agree that their “objective validity” should be restricted to such objects. He thinks that they can also disclose – by themselves – the purely *intelligible* rationality or “logos” that permeates the world. Such rationality, for Hegel, does not transcend the realm of empirical things, but is immanent in that realm. It is “the pure concept, which is the innermost nature of objects, their simple life-pulse, as well as of the subjective thinking of them” (SL 17 / LS 16), and, Hegel believes, it is directly accessible to us through the categories of pure thought. In this respect, such inner rationality resembles Spinoza's substance, which is also the “immanent”, rather than “transitive”, cause of things and is known through pure reason.¹³

We shall consider in detail in chapter 5 of this volume what justifies Hegel's confidence that pure categories can disclose the rational character of being, “the logos, the reason of that which is” (SL 19 / LS 19). At this point, we need only note that, in Hegel's view, Kant limits the application of the categories to empirical objects because of the *abstract* way in which he conceives of those categories: he regards them as “empty” logical forms that acquire content only from the sensuous, *empirical* material to which they are applied (see EL 86 / 119-20 [§ 43]). Kant's position, expressed in Hegel's words, is that “thoughts are *only* thoughts, that is, that only sense perception gives filling and reality to them” (SL 25 / LS 28). Without this empirical “filling”, Hegel's Kant contends, the categories would mean little or nothing to us: they would be “empty”, just as intuitions without concepts or categories would be “blind”. Categories thus have legitimate application only to objects of sensuous, *empirical* experience; that is, their sole purpose is to turn what we perceive and intuit into such objects of experience.¹⁴

By calling Kant's categories “empty”, Hegel is not denying that each has a distinct logical form. In the first *Critique*, Kant states that even “if one leaves out the sensible determination” – or schema – “of persistence”, the category of substance still has its own, albeit minimal, logical form: “substance would signify nothing more than a something that can be thought as a subject (without being a predicate of something else)” (CPR B 186). Similarly, all the other “unschematized” categories have their logical forms, and Hegel is aware that

Kant draws such logical distinctions between categories (see VGPW 3: 344-5). Kant also insists, however, that a category “would remain (as one says) without *sense* [*Sinn*], i.e. without significance [*Bedeutung*], if it were not made “*sensible*” (*sinnlich*) (CPR B 299). The category of substance would mean little to us, and could play no role in cognition, if we did not think of a substance as something persisting *in time*, and a cause would be little to us if we did not think of it as “the real upon which, whenever it is posited, something else always follows” (again, in time) (CPR B 183).¹⁵ Furthermore, categories must not only be thought together with their schemata in this way if they are to yield cognition, but they must also be “related to empirical intuitions, i.e. to *data* for possible experience”; otherwise, Kant writes, “they have no objective validity at all, but are rather a mere play” of the imagination or the understanding (CPR B 298). Categories enable us to *know* something, therefore, only when they are conceived in temporal terms through their schemata – when substance is thought of as that which *persists* – and when they are used to connect empirical intuitions with one another. It is this claim of Kant’s that I take Hegel to have in mind when he describes Kant’s categories as “empty”.

For Kant, each category may well have its distinct logical form, but it requires *sensuous*, *intuitive* content to be concretely meaningful and cognitively informative. As Hegel puts it, Kant’s categories “have a content only through the given manifold material of intuitions”: they are “the positing-as-a unity [*In-Einheit-Setzen*] of the manifold materials, and have significance only through their connection with these materials” (VGPW 3: 346). In Kant’s own words, “the pure categories [. . .] are nothing other than the representations of things in general insofar as the *manifold of their intuition* must be thought through one or another of these logical functions” (CPR A 245-6, emphasis added). Accordingly, Kant insists, no “transcendental” application of the categories to anything other than objects of empirical experience is legitimate (at least if it aims at cognition) (CPR B 297-8, 303).¹⁶

Hegel’s Kant considers this restriction of the categories to empirical objects to result from his critical examination of them. For Hegel himself, by contrast, Kant’s position stems from his *uncritical* adherence to the standpoint of the understanding. As Hegel sees it, the idea that categories derive their content and concrete meaning from schemata and sensuous intuition goes hand in hand with – indeed, *is* – the thought that they are themselves merely empty forms; but this reduction of categories to empty forms without their own content is the work of *understanding* that separates “form” and “content” (or “matter”) from one another. Accordingly, Kant restricts the range of application of the categories because he adheres, without question or clear justification, to a conceptual distinction belonging to “*reflective* understanding” (SL 24-5 / LS 27-8). One might try to defend Kant’s conception of the categories by noting that he considers human thought to be discursive: for discursive thought, in his

view, requires something to be *given* to it – by sensuous intuition – if it is to have anything at all to think about.¹⁷ As we shall see, however, Kant's idea that thought is discursive itself rests on the sharp distinction between the "form" and externally given "matter" of thought (1: 35–6). That idea thus confirms Hegel's charge that Kant's "critique" of the categories is the product of reflective understanding. In this respect, therefore, Kant is closer to previous metaphysicians, such as Wolff, than he recognizes; indeed, in the *Logic* Hegel includes Kant's critical philosophy explicitly in what he calls "metaphysical philosophizing" (SL 95 / LS 118).

Hegel takes his own *Logic* to provide a more thorough critique of the categories than that offered by Kant; and in the course of that work he shows that categories are not just empty forms that need to be given sensuous content but concepts with a concrete *logical content* of their own. Such content, he states, consists in the "concretion" (*Konkretion*) of the categories themselves – that is, in their being, not one-sided abstractions, but complex unities of opposing determinations (SL 27-8, / LS 31). As we have seen, Hegel agrees with Kant that categories enable us to understand what we *intuit* to be a realm of empirical objects and in this way acquire an empirical meaning themselves. Nonetheless, *pace* Kant, categories, for Hegel, have their own concrete *logical content*, which is independent of sensuous intuition, and so they are not essentially restricted in their cognitive use to empirical objects. This means, however, that they are not prevented by any such restriction from disclosing – yielding knowledge of – the purely intelligible structure of, or "logos" within, things: what Hegel calls the "*concept* [*Begriff*] of things" (SL 19 / LS 18-19). We will have to say more later to justify Hegel's positive claim that pure thought and its categories can, indeed, disclose that intelligible structure, can reveal the rational character of being. It is clear from what we have said, though, that, in Hegel's view, a proper grasp of the *logical* character of the categories undermines Kant's reason for imposing an *epistemic* restriction on them by limiting their cognitive use to the sphere of the empirical. (Note, by the way, that in the logic of essence Hegel also considers the concepts of "form" and "content" – and "form" and "matter" – directly and shows how they are dialectically united. This further undermines the sharp distinction between these concepts – and the related thought that categories are mere "forms" without concrete "content" of their own – that Kant takes for granted).¹⁸

Yet we should be careful not to get ahead of ourselves. Hegel sets out much of his critique of Kant in the introductory sections of the *Logic* and *Encyclopaedia Logic* that precede speculative logic itself.¹⁹ In these preliminary texts, therefore, he has not yet proven, and so cannot yet claim, that categories have their own logical content. Accordingly, he cannot draw on this claim there to reject definitively the epistemic restriction Kant imposes on the categories. All he can legitimately do is point to the unquestioned *presuppositions* that underlie Kant's

incomplete critique of pure reason. Before presenting his speculative logic, therefore, what Hegel can say is this: Kant's restriction of the categories to empirical objects rests on his uncritical adherence to the standpoint and conceptual distinctions of the understanding, and this ill befits a truly *critical* philosopher.

According to Hegel, not only does Kant restrict the categories – that is, their “objective validity” – to objects of empirical experience, but he also regards such experience itself as the realm of mere *appearance*. The second sense in which the categories are limited, for Kant, is thus that they apply to, and yield knowledge of, appearances only, not things as they are in themselves (see SL 26 / LS 29, and CPR B 297-8, 343). In Hegel's view, Kant reduces knowledge of the empirical world to knowledge of mere appearance because he takes its two principal components – sensible intuition and the categories – to be *subjective* (see LHP 3: 178 / VGP 4: 155).²⁰

Hegel does not object to the idea that sensations are subjective. He accepts that hardness, for example, is my subjective sensation – a feeling that *I* have – and that I locate hardness *outside* myself in space only through spatial “intuition” (*Anschauung*) (LHP 3: 174 / VGP 4: 152).²¹ Yet Kant also takes the forms of intuition themselves, namely space and time, to be subjective. This is not to say that they vary from individual to individual in the way that sensations may do: space and time, for Kant, are, as a priori, the necessary and universal conditions of sensibility and thus the same for all of us (as Hegel is well aware).²² Nonetheless, space, in Kant's view, is the “subjective condition of sensibility” insofar as it is merely the manner in which *we* intuit things, merely the “way in which the subject is affected”, but not the form of things themselves (CPR B 42, 129). Accordingly, we can “speak of space, extended beings, and so on, only from the human standpoint”; and the same is true of time.²³ As Kant writes,

Space represents no property at all of any things in themselves nor any relation of them to each other, i.e. no determination of them that attaches to objects themselves and that would remain even if one were to abstract from all subjective conditions of intuition.

—CPR B 42

In Hegel's view, by contrast – which will be justified in his philosophies of nature and spirit – space and time are not just subjective, but are bestowed on things by reason or “the creative eternal Idea”; “things are [thus] in truth *themselves* spatial and temporal” (EPM 181 / 253 [§ 448 A]).²⁴ Intuition, for Hegel, is, accordingly, consciousness of a space and time that are independent of us and “would remain even if one were to abstract from all subjective conditions of intuition”. In the same vein, Hegel disputes Kant's claim that the categories of thought are subjective.

For Kant, what is given to us through sensation – colours, shapes and so on – is intuited as falling in a common space and time, but it is not thereby conceived to be a distinct object of experience, to be something fully *objective*. Categories turn what we intuit into something objective by investing it with unity and with explicit necessity and universality: through categories we understand what we see in space to be what *must* be seen by *every* finite rational being (capable of intuiting things in space and, of course, of seeing the thing or event concerned). What we encounter may be some quite singular occurrence; but we think of it as objective insofar as we think that every rational being like ourselves would *have* to experience it in the same (or a similar) way.²⁵

Hegel praises Kant for equating objectivity with necessity and universality: “Kant called what conforms to thought (the universal and the necessary) *objective*; and he was certainly quite right to do this” (EL 83 / 115 [§ 41 A2]).²⁶ Hegel criticizes Kant, however, for reducing the objectivity constituted by the categories to *subjective* objectivity, objectivity *for us*, that is, for maintaining that “experience *in its entirety* falls within *subjectivity*” (EL 81 / 113 [§ 41]). Again, this means, not that such objectivity varies with each individual, but that it is relative to finite human thought as such, to the thought that we – indeed, all finite rational beings – share.²⁷ Kant performs this reduction of objectivity to something subjective, Hegel argues, because he identifies the I, or the “unity of self-consciousness”, as the source of the categories and concludes from this that they are “*only our* thoughts”. Since the categories have their source in the I – albeit the I we all share – they do no more than enable *us* to understand the world in certain ways, and so do not disclose the way things are in themselves; indeed, they are “distinguished from what the thing is *in-itself* by an impassable gulf” (EL 83 / 116 [§§ 41 A2, 42]). The categories turn what we see and hear into something objective; yet they and the forms of intuition are themselves subjective; the sphere of objectivity they constitute thus remains at one remove from things in themselves and is no more than *appearance*. Such appearance (*Erscheinung*) is not a sphere of mere illusion (*Schein*), since it comprises objects that we experience to be empirically real, to be “out there” in space and time (CPR B 69). Nonetheless, these objects are ultimately no more than objects *for us*, objects of *our* possible experience, and so are to be regarded as mere *appearances* rather than things in themselves.²⁸

In Hegel's view, Kant restricts the categories to objects of empirical experience because he understands them to be *empty* forms that acquire content – and thereby become cognitively informative – only through sensuous intuition. He restricts them to mere appearances because he regards them (together with the forms of intuition) as *subjective*. The categories are the universal and necessary conditions of the experience of objects, but they are ultimately subjective because they have their ground in the “spontaneity” of thinking (see EL 83 / 116 [§ 42], and CPR B 75). Once again, however, Hegel notes, Kant's position

relies on a distinction made by the understanding: in this case, that between “subjective” and “objective”.

Hegel maintains that the term “objective” can have three different meanings. It can mean, first, what lies outside us in space; second, what is universal and necessary; and, third, what something is *in itself*, “what is there [*was da ist*], as distinct from what is only thought by us” (EL 83 / 116 [§ 41 A2]). Hegel’s Kant takes the categories to be compatible with (Hegelian) objectivity in the first two senses, but not the third: through the categories we understand things in space and time to have a necessary structure for all finite rational beings, but we do not bring to mind what those things are *objectively* in (what Hegel considers to be) the strong sense, namely what they are *in themselves* quite apart from us. Hegel’s Kant limits the categories in this way because – despite his insight into the connection between objectivity, universality and necessity – he thinks that what is subjective and what is objective are, ultimately, distinct from and opposed to one another: categories that have their source in the *subject* – the I – cannot bring to mind what is *objective* in the sense of being independent of thought. Hegel’s charge against Kant is thus, in Sally Sedgwick’s words, that he adheres to the “thesis of absolute opposition”.²⁹

This charge, in my view, is correct (with a qualification to be added below [1: 33]). Indeed, Kant’s insistence on the *conceptual* distinction between “subjective” and “objective” can even be seen in his account of the pure forms of *intuition*. In Kant’s view, categories are required for there to be “formal intuitions” of distinct spaces and times, but they do not belong to the forms of intuition themselves (CPR B 160n.). The latter are thus subject to their own limitation that has nothing to do with categories in the narrow sense. These forms are limited by the mere fact that they are *a priori*: for this means that they are subjective and so cannot belong to things in themselves. The objects conditioned by these forms, while no illusions, are thus merely the objects of *our* possible experience and in that sense “appearances”.

Yet, from a Hegelian viewpoint, this limitation is not intrinsic to the forms of intuition as such, but arises because Kant adheres to the sharp conceptual distinction, drawn by understanding, between “subjective” and “objective”. Kant’s argument, put simply, is that what is *a priori* and so grounded in the *subject* cannot at the same time belong to things *objectively* (in what is for Hegel the strong sense). To put the point another way: no “determinations” of things themselves can be intuited by the subject “*prior* to the existence of the things to which they pertain” (CPR B 42, emphasis added); what we do intuit prior to things – *a priori* – thus cannot belong objectively *to* those things themselves and so must be merely subjective. Implicit in this claim is the further one, endorsed by empiricists, that we can know something *of* things themselves only *from* those things *a posteriori*. Kant makes this claim explicitly in the *Prolegomena*:

If our intuition had to be of the kind that represented things *as they are in themselves*, then absolutely no intuition *a priori* would take place, but it would always be empirical. For I can only know what may be contained in the object in itself if the object is present and given to me.

—P 78 / 34 [§ 9]³⁰

What belongs *to* the object itself must be known *from* the object; ergo, what is known from the *subject* cannot belong to the object itself. This, however, assumes that there is a clear distinction between ourselves and things, between subjects and objects: it assumes that we are, as it were, “over here”, and objects are “over there”. Kant never justifies this assumption, but he simply takes it for granted without a further thought.

Kant puts forward the same argument about the categories. It is impossible, he contends, to know anything of things themselves through *a priori* concepts or, as he puts it, “to have any *a priori* concepts of them at all”:

For whence should we obtain them? If we take them from the object [. . .], then our concepts would be merely empirical and not *a priori* concepts. If we take them from ourselves, then that which is merely in us [*bloß in uns*] cannot determine the constitution of an object distinct from our representations.

—CPR A 128-9

Once again: we can know *about* objects themselves only *from* those objects; so what we draw from within ourselves cannot tell us about what is distinct from us.

The last quotation confirms Hegel's charge that Kant considers categories themselves to be, ultimately, subjective. Categories, for Kant, yield no knowledge of things in themselves, not only because they are limited to empirical objects whose spatio-temporal form is subjective, but also because they are themselves subjective forms of thought.³¹ They are, indeed, the conditions of the *objects* of experience (CPR B 197); but Kant insists, as Henry Allison puts it, that “whatever is required for the recognition or picking out of what is ‘objective’ in our experience, must reflect the cognitive structure of the mind (its manner of representing), *rather than* the nature of the object as it is in itself”.³²

Hegel points out, however, that what is subjective and what is objective do not have to be opposed to one another in this way: “although the categories (e.g. unity, cause and effect, etc.) pertain to thinking as such, it does not at all follow from this that they must therefore be merely something of ours, and not also determinations of objects themselves” (EL 85-6 / 119 [§ 42 A3]).³³ Kant insists on the sharp distinction between “subjective” and “objective”, but, in Hegel's view, he provides no clear justification for doing so: he simply *presupposes* the distinction – uncritically – and uses it to reduce the realm of experience, structured by the categories, to mere appearance.³⁴

Hegel, by contrast, will undermine this distinction in his *Logic* (specifically, in the logic of the concept). Furthermore, even before entering speculative logic, he contends that a properly critical approach to the understanding may not just take the latter's distinctions for granted: we may not simply *assume* that categories, whose source is in the subject, are "*only our thoughts*" and so quite distinct from "what the thing is *in-itself*" (EL 83 / 116 [§ 41 A2]). In Hegel's view, the sharp separation of subject and object is not only undermined within philosophy, but, since it is a mere presupposition, it must be discarded *before* we enter philosophy: it is "*vor derselben abzulegen*" (SL 25 / LS 27). If we discard this distinction, however, we cannot but conclude that the categories of thought *can* disclose the nature of what is truly objective. The categories of quantity, causality and so on disclose the quantity and causality in being itself, and so in that sense belong to being as much as they do to thought.³⁵

This does not mean that Hegel makes knowledge of being in itself possible through mere fiat: he does not just arbitrarily declare that the distinction between thought and being in itself must go and that the latter is therefore directly knowable by the former. As we shall see, Hegel's argument is more subtle than that. It is that truly *critical* thought must discard all assumptions about thought itself, but this leaves us merely with the indeterminate being of thought;³⁶ the latter, however, is so indeterminate that it is just indeterminate being *as such*; this being then mutates logically into, among other things, "being-in-itself" (*Ansichsein*) (see 1: 107–10, 187–8). Thought thus brings itself to cognition of being in itself through setting aside all determinate assumptions about itself and then considering what is logically entailed by the indeterminate being with which it is left.³⁷ We will look more closely at this argument later, but what we need to note here is this: for Hegel a thorough *post-Kantian* critique of the understanding leads us back to the *metaphysical* position that "what *is*, by being *thought*, is known *in itself*".³⁸ It was argued above (1: 9) that metaphysics, for Hegel, is "the way in which the *mere understanding* views the objects of reason" (EL 65 / 93 [§ 27]). Yet metaphysics, as Hegel conceives it, also believes that the categories of thought disclose "the *fundamental determinations of things*" (EL 66 / 94 [§28]). In contrast to Kant, Hegel will suspend the sharp distinctions and oppositions of metaphysical understanding – at least at the start of his logic – but, also in contrast to Kant, he will *retain* the metaphysical conviction that thought by itself can disclose what is.

As we have seen, Hegel does not turn his back on Kant altogether: he retains Kant's idea that empirical experience of objects requires a priori categories that have their ground in thought (and he justifies this idea in the course of his philosophy of spirit).³⁹ Against Kant, however, he denies that such categories thereby fall short of anything: the categories that define what it is to be an object also (when they are conceived properly) disclose the inherent structure of things themselves. This is not to say that every time we employ the category of "causality"

and judge *X* to *cause* *Y*, we are correct: Hegel does not deny, any more than Kant does, that we can make errors in judgement. In Hegel's view, however, in thinking of things as causally connected *at all*, we are not just thinking of them as our thought requires us to do – though we are, indeed, subject to the necessity inherent in thought – but we are thereby bringing to mind what things are in themselves. Furthermore, Hegel thinks that he is led to this position by being more critical of the understanding than Kant is, *not* less critical.

THE PROBLEM OF THE “THING IN ITSELF”

To recapitulate: in Hegel's view, Kant reduces the realm of experience to “appearance” because he thinks that categories, together with the forms of intuition, are subjective. This means that, for Kant, categories do not bring to mind what things are in themselves, what they are objectively. This conception of the categories rests, however, on the idea that what is *subjective* cannot at the same time be genuinely *objective*, and that idea is merely an uncritical presupposition of the understanding. Note that in making this criticism Hegel takes Kant's concept of the “thing-in-itself” to refer, not only to what is objective rather than subjective, but to what things *are* objectively, to what they *really are* in themselves; that is, he conflates Kant's thing in itself with *being*. There is, however, reason to think that in this latter respect Hegel subtly misunderstands Kant's concept of the thing in itself.

In Hegel's view, Kant begins from the idea of a thing that exists in its own right – a thing that is “not posited and determined by thinking self-consciousness” (SL 41 / LS 49). Kant then claims that thought remains enclosed within itself and so fails to reach this thing. As Hegel puts it (reproducing what he takes to be Kant's position), thinking, in its relation to its object, does not go “out of itself to the object”, and the latter thus remains “utterly a ‘beyond’ of thought” (SL 25 / LS 27).⁴⁰ For Hegel's Kant, therefore, the thing in itself is a real thing that is utterly “alien and external to thinking” (SL 41/ LS 49). For Hegel himself, by contrast, Kant's unreachable “thing” is not *beyond* thought at all, because it is conceived by means of the concepts and categories of thought. It is conceived as the “negative” of determinate thought through the category of negation, and as empty and featureless through the abstract concept of “identity”. Indeed, Kant's thing in itself is not actually a real unreachable *thing*, but is simply an “abstraction” *produced* by thought itself (EL 87 / 120-1 [§ 44 R]).⁴¹ Kant's position, in Hegel's view, is thus doubly problematic: first, Kant keeps the “subjective” categories of thought at one remove from what he takes things to *be* objectively in themselves, but second, such “things” are themselves no more than the abstract product of thought (though he does not realize this).

Hegel obviously intends this second claim to be a criticism of Kant that undermines the latter's conception of the thing in itself. Yet it is not clear that

Kant would regard it as a straightforward criticism, for he is well aware that the concept of the “thing in itself” is produced by thought. *Pace* Hegel, Kant does not start from the idea that there is something out there we can’t reach; he starts from the objects of experience and examines what Allison calls their “epistemic conditions”, the conditions under which alone they can be objects of experience.⁴² That is to say, he starts *within* experience, not by transcending it. Kant takes the conditions of the objects of experience to include the pure forms of intuition and the categories. Since both these conditions are *a priori*, he argues, they must also be merely subjective: “for neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited *prior* to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited *a priori*” (CPR B 42, emphasis added). That in turn means that the objects of experience that presuppose these conditions, while no mere illusions, must be mere “appearances” or “phenomena”, that is, objects *for us*: they must merely be objects seen from the human, or finite, point of view.

Kant also insists, however, that we cannot make sense of the idea of an “appearance” “without anything that appears” (CPR B xxvi-xxvii). That is to say, in Allison’s formulation, in order to consider things as they appear,

it is necessary to distinguish the character that these things reveal as appearing (their spatiotemporal properties, and so forth) from the character that the same things are thought to possess when they are considered as they are in themselves, independently of the conditions under which they appear.⁴³

Accordingly, Kant writes, “the understanding, when it calls an object in a relation mere phenomenon, simultaneously makes for itself, beyond this relation, another representation of an *object in itself*” (CPR B 306). Kant openly acknowledges, therefore, that the concept of the thing in itself is “made” or produced by thought, as the necessary correlate of the concept of “appearance” or “phenomenon”.⁴⁴

The concept is produced, more specifically, to “limit the pretension of sensibility” and so coincides with the thought of the “noumenon in the *negative* sense” (CPR B 307, 310-12). It enables us to think that the forms of sensible intuition merely condition empirical objects, or “appearances”, and are not to be extended beyond the latter to anything else, to any “thing in itself”. On the other hand, Kant’s concept also enables us to think of ourselves as affected *by* something non-sensible or “intelligible” and thus as dependent, sensuous beings. In this respect, the thought of the “thing” or “object” “in itself” coincides with that of the “transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance (thus not itself appearance)” (CPR B 344).⁴⁵ Note that in neither case does Kant assert dogmatically that there *are* things in themselves. He claims that we must form the *thought* of such non-spatio-temporal things in order to

think of “appearances” *as* mere appearances and *as* caused by that which is not an appearance.

Hegel's criticism of Kant's “thing in itself” thus appears to be mistaken. Kant knows full well that the thing in itself, or the concept thereof, is the product of thought (and he also insists that this concept, far from being wholly abstract, can be further determined using categories such as causality).⁴⁶ Kant's “thing in itself” is not meant, therefore, to be a real thing lying utterly beyond thought, as Hegel contends, but is itself simply *a thought*.

Yet from another perspective Hegel's criticism is not so wide of the mark: for Kant's thought of the thing in itself is not *just* a thought, but is precisely the thought of an *object* distinct from us: “an *object in itself*” (CPR B 306-7). Indeed, it is the thought of “something actual for itself” that is the “true correlate” of our representations (CPR B xx, 45). This thought on its own does not permit us to claim that things in themselves actually exist, but it does permit us to think that they might. Kant insists, however, that “what the things may be in themselves [*an sich sein mögen*] I do not know” (CPR B 332). We can certainly *think* of things themselves as causing their appearances (just as we can *think* of the soul as a substance [CPR A 350, 356]); but this does not amount to knowing anything at all about them.⁴⁷ In this respect, therefore, Hegel is right: Kant does, indeed, argue that our thoughts are separated from the thing in itself “by an impassable gulf” (EL 83 / 116 [§ 41 A2]).⁴⁸

Yet even here we must be careful: for what Kant distinguishes from thought is what things must be *thought* to be, and so *may* be, in themselves – “objects that are merely thought” (*die man bloß denkt*) (CPR B xviii n.) – rather than, as Hegel claims, “what the thing is *in itself*” (EL 83 / 116 [§ 41 A2]). Despite what Hegel maintains, Kant's thing in itself is thus not some indisputable *being* just out of reach, but what is *thought* to be distinct from thought (and in that sense “objective”). This is the qualification mentioned above (1: 28): that, at least in one respect, Hegel subtly misunderstands Kant's “thing in itself”.

This misunderstanding does not, however, completely undermine Hegel's conception (and critique) of Kant's distinction between appearances and things in themselves. To see why this is the case, we need to note that, in drawing this distinction, Hegel's Kant actually draws *two* distinctions at the same time. On the one hand, he distinguishes between a sphere of empirical objectivity whose epistemic conditions are subjective – and which, for that reason, is a sphere of mere “appearance” – and the *objective* character things are thought to have in their own right apart from those conditions. Kant himself might not describe the distinction in quite this way; but his explicit insistence that the forms of intuition are subjective, and so do not belong to things themselves (CPR B 42), makes it inevitable that we equate the latter with things as they are thought to be *objectively* on their own. In this respect, therefore, I consider Hegel's understanding of Kant to be correct.⁴⁹

On the other hand, Hegel's Kant distinguishes between appearances, governed by the categories, and things as they *are* in themselves, that is, between thought and *being* (that is utterly beyond thought). In this respect, I have suggested, Hegel subtly misinterprets Kant: for Kant in fact distinguishes the categories (and the appearances they determine) only from things as they are *thought* to be in themselves (and he claims that, although categories cannot yield knowledge of such "things", they can and must be used to formulate the thought of them). *Pace* Hegel, therefore, Kant does not put *being* or *existence* beyond thought by distinguishing between things in themselves and appearances governed by the categories.

As Hegel points out, however, Kant does put being, or existence, itself beyond thought elsewhere in his critical philosophy (for example, in his critique of the ontological argument for the existence of God).⁵⁰ It is true that, in Kant's view, *thought* judges a thing to exist or to *be* such and such: when I carry a body, I feel the pressure of weight, but the understanding judges that "it, the body, *is* heavy" (CPR B 142). Yet the understanding cannot judge something to be such and such, or to exist, on the basis of concepts alone: as Kant puts it, "whatever and however much our concept of an object may contain, we have to go out beyond it in order to provide it with existence [*Existenz*]" (CPR B 629).⁵¹ More specifically, something must be given to the understanding through sensuous intuition, and only in that case can the understanding judge it to *be* such and such (where such "being", of course, is being *for us*).⁵² Kant contends, therefore, that "for objects of pure thinking", such as God, "there is no means whatever for cognizing their existence [*Dasein*], because it would have to be cognized entirely *a priori*" and so cannot be given to us in *sensuous* intuition (CPR B 629). God's existence cannot be declared absolutely impossible, Kant states, but "it is a presupposition that we cannot justify through anything": for we cannot know through thought alone that he exists, and there is no intuition we could have that would confirm his existence.

In Kant's view, thought by itself can formulate the judgement *that* God exists, but doing so does not constitute direct knowledge *of* his existence: for thought alone cannot bring the existence or being of the divine *directly to mind*. Hegel is thus right to maintain that, for Kant, there is no "transition" from the "concept" of God straight to his "being". He is right, too, to imply that this is not just due to some peculiarity of the concept of "God" but reflects Kant's broader understanding of the relation between thought and being. Thought is essentially limited, for Kant, since, whatever concept we may consider, "existence remains for him something utterly other than the concept" (VGPW 3: 360). Hegel claims that previous philosophers, such as Anselm, Descartes and Spinoza, "all accept the unity of being and thought" (VGPW 3: 360): they all believe that thought by itself can think – that is, bring to mind – *being* itself, be it the being of divine substance, or of objects, or of the I. Kant, by contrast,

insists that thought and being are radically and definitively distinct. Accordingly, as Hegel puts it, thought, for Kant, does not go “out of itself” (*aus sich heraus*) and disclose what there is, but it remains confined to itself: thoughts by themselves are “only thoughts” and bring to mind only what is conceivable, not what *is*, not being itself (SL 25 / LS 27-8).⁵³

I have suggested that Hegel subtly misunderstands Kant’s “thing in itself” which is not the thing as it really *is*, but the thing as it is *thought* to be apart from the conditions of human cognition. Nonetheless, Hegel is correct, in my view, to assert that Kant keeps thought and being apart. This is made especially clear in § 76 of Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*: for there Kant states explicitly that concepts “pertain merely to the possibility of an object”, whereas sensuous intuitions alone give us something actual (or, more precisely, something that can be judged to be actual) (CJ 272 / 315). That is to say, through concepts alone we think only what is conceivable, what is thinkable, but we do not think or bring to mind what actually exists.⁵⁴

Our thought could do so, in Kant’s view, only if it were a form of “intellectual intuition” (or “intuitive” understanding) (CPR B 72, and CJ 272 / 315 [§ 76]). Since we are finite human beings, however, our intuition is irreducibly *sensuous*, so our thought or “intellect” cannot be intuitive but must be *discursive* (CPR B 52, 72, 93, 148).⁵⁵ This means that our thought can understand, and judge to “be” such and such, only what is *given* to it independently through sensuous intuition. Our basic humanity, therefore, prevents us from knowing or “intuiting” directly, through intellect or thought alone, what *is*.⁵⁶ This is not the only reason why, for Kant, our thought is limited. It is also limited by the fact that, in its pure form, it is a priori (like the pure forms of intuition): for, as we saw above, what is a priori is merely subjective, in Kant’s view, and what is subjective cannot disclose what is (or, rather, is thought to be) objective in the strong sense. It is also true, though, that, for Kant, the *discursive* character of our thought prevents the latter from knowing by itself what there *is*.

To Hegelian eyes, however, Kant takes our thought to be discursive, and so to require a distinct *given* content, not just because he takes our intuition to be sensuous (rather than intellectual), but also – and more importantly – because he takes the categories of thought themselves to be “empty” forms; and he takes the latter to be empty because he assumes there is a clear distinction between the form and content (or matter) of concepts (see SL 24-5 / LS 26-7). Kant’s conception of what it is to be “discursive” thus rests firmly on a distinction drawn by the understanding.⁵⁷ Evidence to support this charge against Kant can be found in the Amphiboly chapter of the first *Critique*. There, in the section on “matter and form”, Kant writes that these two concepts are “inseparably [. . .] bound up with every use of the understanding” (CPR B 322). Just how fundamental they are can be seen from the fact that the difference between them grounds the further difference between “the determinable” (*das*

Bestimmbare) – or the matter to be determined – and the “determining” (*Bestimmung*) of its form. This latter difference in turn underlies the following important claim by Kant: “the understanding [. . .] demands first that something be *given* [*gegeben*] (at least in the concept) in order to be able to *determine* it in a certain way” (CPR B 322-3, emphasis added). The very idea that understanding determines something *given* to it – that it is discursive rather than directly intuitive – thus rests on the *conceptual* distinction, drawn by understanding, between form and matter. Now earlier in the first *Critique* Kant describes the spontaneity of understanding as “determining” and “sense” (*Sinn*) as “determinable” (CPR B 151-2).⁵⁸ This suggests that the very distinction between understanding, which determines something given, and *sensibility*, through which that something is given – the distinction on which Kant’s whole critique of pure reason is based – is itself the product of *understanding*.⁵⁹

To Hegelian eyes, therefore, Kant’s critical philosophy is by no means as critical as it needs to be: for despite restricting the objective validity of the understanding’s categories, Kant never challenges the authority of understanding itself. Indeed, his insistence on the limits of the categories, and of human cognition as a whole, presupposes that authority. First, the idea that the a priori categories and pure forms of sensibility are subjective, and so limited, rests on the distinction, *drawn by understanding*, between what is subjective and what is objective in the strong sense (that is, adding the qualification noted above, the thing as it must be *thought* to be in itself). Second, understanding distinguishes itself from sensibility, for it requires that some matter be *given* to it for it to form and the only way in which such matter can be given to finite beings like us is through sensibility.⁶⁰ Third, the reverse argument – that our thought must be discursive *because* our intuition must be sensuous – is also the work of understanding: for it is understanding that stipulates that our having sensuous intuitions *precludes* our being capable of intellectual intuition too (just as it stipulates that being finite and human precludes sharing “the God’s-eye view of things”).⁶¹ Fourth, understanding draws the distinction between itself and the being it claims it cannot know by itself. Kant’s critique of the categories of understanding thus fails to challenge the authority of understanding as such. He certainly sets limits to the legitimate employment of understanding; but those limits *uncritically* presuppose the conceptual distinctions and oppositions *of understanding*.⁶²

CATEGORIES AND JUDGEMENT

The charge against Kant so far is that he retains a *verständig* conception of concepts that are fundamental to his thought but are not categories in the strict Kantian sense. These concepts include the pairs “form / content” (or “form / matter”), “subjective / objective” and “thought / being”.⁶³ In Hegel’s view,

indeed, Kant distinguishes even more sharply between such concepts than pre-Kantian metaphysics does (most obviously in the case of “thought” and “being”, which such metaphysics takes to form a “unity”).⁶⁴ Yet Hegel also charges Kant with preserving a *verständig* conception of his categories proper: Kant restricts the objective validity of the latter to mere appearances (and associates them with schemata), but he otherwise leaves their logical form, as the understanding conceives it, unchanged and unchallenged. As Hegel puts it, Kantian critique produces no “alteration” (*Änderung*) in the categories,

but leaves them for the subject in the same shape as they formerly possessed for the object. [. . .] The said critique has therefore only removed the forms of objective thinking from the thing, but has left them in the subject as it originally found them.

—SL 26-7 / LS 29-30⁶⁵

For Kant, therefore, the category of “reality” (*Realität*) remains quite distinct from that of “negation”, which later allows him to formulate the idea of God as the most real being, or “this *All* of reality”, that contains nothing negative (an idea of God that replicates that found in pre-Kantian metaphysics, as Hegel conceives it).⁶⁶ Similarly, “quality” remains quite distinct from “quantity”, which allows Kant to call the proposition that “the straight line between two points is the shortest” a “synthetic proposition” (CPR B 16).⁶⁷

In Hegel’s view, Kant begins to challenge such sharp distinctions between categories in his discussion of the “Antinomy of Pure Reason”. He does so by implicitly showing that the categories are contradictory, that is, that each one is not just itself but is inseparable from its opposite or negation; and he shows this by arguing that two mutually exclusive categories must both be applied to the same world.⁶⁸ We will consider Hegel’s discussion of Kant’s first and second antinomies in more detail when we reach the account of quantity in the *Logic*.⁶⁹ It is important to note at this point, however, that, as far as Hegel is concerned, Kant’s antinomies fail ultimately to live up to their promise. They provide the “occasion” (*Veranlassung*) for others, such as Hegel himself, to consider anew the content of the categories and to challenge properly the sharp distinctions that the understanding makes between them, and in this respect they “can be regarded as a main transition into more recent philosophy”;⁷⁰ yet they end up themselves *preserving* the understanding’s distinctions. As Hegel writes:

On closer inspection, the Kantian antinomies contain nothing more than the wholly simple categorical assertion of *each* of the two opposed moments of a determination, each on its own, *isolated* from the other.

—SL 158/ LS 200

In spite of the fact, therefore, that Kant's antinomies are significant for later philosophers, such as Hegel, they actually leave Kant himself firmly wedded to the understanding's "oppositional" conception of the categories.⁷¹

In Hegel's view, Kant also remains tied to the understanding in a further sense: for he follows pre-Kantian metaphysicians, such as Wolff, in assuming that thought is minimally *judgement*, and he derives the categories from what he takes to be the fundamental forms of judgement.⁷² Hegel somewhat harshly suggests that "Kant's philosophy took the easy [*bequem*] way in its *finding* of the categories" by beginning from judgement (EL 84 / 116-17 [§ 42 R]), but his interpretation, in my view, is otherwise correct. Kant does, indeed, assert that concepts are "predicates of possible judgments" (CPR B 94), and he derives the categories from what he calls the "logical functions" of judgement. Indeed, he defines categories explicitly as "concepts of an object in general, by means of which its intuition is regarded as *determined* with regard to one of the *logical functions* for judgments" (CPR B 128, B 143).

For Kant, the logical "function" of a judgement is the specific way in which it unites its component representations (CPR B 93 ff.). So an affirmative judgement states that "S is P", a negative judgement that "S is *not* P", a universal judgement that "*all* S's are P", and so on.⁷³ Each such function then gives rise to a specific category. A category itself has two core components. The first is the bare thought of an *object*, of *something* (*Etwas*), as such.⁷⁴ The second is the thought of that something as "*determined*" (*bestimmt*) in respect of a logical function: as definitely this, not that. In addition, categories are concepts through which we understand sensuous intuitions to form a unity. If we put all of this together, we get the definition cited above: a category is a concept through which we understand what we *intuit* to be *something* – an object – that is *determined* in respect of a logical function of judgement.

Thus, from the form of the affirmative judgement, "S is P", we derive the thought of something that is determined to be affirmative, not negative: the category of *reality*; from the form of the universal judgement, "all S's are P", we derive the thought of something that is determined to be an "all": the category of *totality*; and from the form of the hypothetical judgement, "if X, then Y", we derive the thought of something that is determined to be a ground, rather than a consequent: the category of *cause*; and so on.⁷⁵

Hegel is quite right, therefore, to claim that Kant derives the categories directly from the logical functions of *judgement*. Furthermore, Kant's derivation automatically distinguishes one category (or moment of a category) from another, since each category determines what we intuit to be real *or* negative, cause *or* effect, and so on. Kant's categories are thus governed from the outset by both judgement *and* sharp difference, just as Hegel contends.⁷⁶

It is also true, in my view, that Kant simply *assumes* that "the *understanding* in general can be represented as a *faculty for judging*" (CPR B 94). Kant's

conception of the categories is thus based on his taking for granted uncritically what understanding is and does. In this sense, Hegel claims, Kant's derivation and account of the categories is merely "empirical".⁷⁷ Kant clearly does not abstract the categories from sense perception in the manner of an empiricist; but his account of them is nonetheless "empirical" in a broader sense, since he derives them from what he *finds* thought to be – namely, judgement – and, more specifically, from the forms (or "functions") of judgement that he *finds* in traditional formal logic. Kant does not, therefore, derive the categories, as Hegel thinks he should, from thought as such – that is, from the sheer being of thought – and so he does not demonstrate their true necessity.⁷⁸

Now one might argue that Kant does not just assume uncritically that understanding is judgement, but derives judgement from his general conception of a concept: for, since a concept, for Kant, is an "analytical unity" that subsumes other representations under it, it can always be expanded *into* a judgement (see CPR B 40, 104-5, 133n).⁷⁹ The concept "old", for example, subsumes "man", "chair", "tree", and so on, and in this sense may be said to contain implicitly an infinite number of possible judgements. Accordingly, an *actual* judgement simply renders explicit one of the possible relations that belong to a concept. (In the case of an a posteriori synthetic judgement, this expansion would be based on experience, and in the case of an analytic judgement it would be based on the definition of the concept concerned.) This suggests, therefore, that Kant does not just assume understanding to be a faculty of judgement, but that he derives that claim from the nature of a concept.

Yet this argument would not get Kant off the hook. First, he simply assumes that all concepts subsume other representations, but he does not show that they have to be understood in this way (and, as becomes clear in the *Logic*, Hegel has a different conception of a concept).⁸⁰ Second, judgement is not really *derived* from the structure of a Kantian concept, but is rather built into it from the start: for by subsuming *other* representations, every concept is already from the outset a repository of possible judgements. Kant thus not only takes for granted explicitly that understanding is judging, but he takes this for granted implicitly in his conception of a concept. Like his metaphysical predecessors, therefore, Kant remained an essentially uncritical thinker: for he never doubted that, and never investigated whether, "the form of the judgment could be the form of truth" (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28 R]).⁸¹

FROM KANT TO HEGEL

Hegel credits Kant with subjecting the categories of understanding to critical examination and thereby laying the foundation of "the new German philosophy".⁸² Yet he also charges Kant with failing to challenge the way the understanding *conceives* of those categories (and other concepts that Kant does

not count as categories in the strict sense). In Hegel's view, Kant's critique restricts the categories to objects of empirical experience, but it does not question the sharp distinctions the understanding draws between categories, such as reality and negation, or between other concepts, such as form and matter or subjective and objective. Hegel himself does not utterly reject such distinctions;⁸³ but in his *Logic* he shows that distinct categories, like reality and negation, are also united with one another through their internal dialectic (see SL 85 / LS 105-6). For Hegel, therefore, the categorial and conceptual distinctions of the understanding are not absolute. Furthermore, he does not begin his study of the categories by presupposing such distinctions, but he derives the latter (and their dialectical overcoming) from an utterly indeterminate, and thus *presuppositionless*, starting point: namely, the sheer being or "simplicity" of thought (EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R]). His logic – and in particular his "objective" logic – constitutes thereby the thoroughgoing, non-question-begging critique of the understanding and its categories that Kant failed to deliver (SL 42 / LS 51).

Hegel's main charge against Kant is thus that he is not as completely *critical* – and sceptical – of the understanding as his own conception of "critique" demands.⁸⁴ Yet we should note that, from Kant's perspective, Hegel appears to misunderstand what *critique* actually involves or implies. The critique of pure reason, as Kant conceives it, is the "*propaedeutic* to the system of pure reason" – that is, to the metaphysics of nature and in particular "transcendental philosophy" – and aims to show how the synthetic a priori judgements belonging to this system are possible (CPR A xx-xxi, B 24-8, 869, 873-4). It carries out its task by explaining how the categories of the understanding apply a priori to (empirical) objects. Critique is thus not meant to be a sceptical endeavour that calls into question how the categories have traditionally been conceived; it aims to put the knowledge we gain, or claim to gain, through the categories on a secure foundation (see CPR B xxxvi, 7). In Sedgwick's words, the aim of Kantian critique is to "save metaphysics by demonstrating that it can be put on the secure path of a science".⁸⁵ There would appear, therefore, to be no obvious motivation within Kantian critique for Hegel's own more radical critique of the categories of the understanding, and the latter risks looking arbitrary and unjustified to Kantian eyes.

Yet one might, indeed, see such a motivation in Kant's bold statement that "our age is the genuine age of criticism, to which everything must submit" (CPR A xi n., emphasis added). Furthermore, from Hegel's (or at least a Hegelian) perspective, a radical critique of the categories of the understanding is implicitly demanded by Kant's rejection of *dogmatism*. Dogmatism, for Hegel, consists in taking opposed categories to be definitively opposed to one another, and it is characteristic, in his view, of pre-Kantian metaphysics (EL 69 / 98 [§ 32]). Kant does not challenge such dogmatism, but merely restricts the objective validity

of the categories – their use for the purpose of cognition – to the objects of experience or “appearances”. Consequently, as Hegel puts it, Kant simply lapses from “objective” dogmatism to “subjective” dogmatism, in which the “finite determinations of the understanding remain [*bestehen*]”, even though they are no longer taken to disclose what is true “in and for itself” (VGPW 3: 333). From a Hegelian perspective, however, the thoroughgoing critique of such dogmatism is implicitly demanded by Kant’s rejection of dogmatism *as Kant himself conceives it*.

Dogmatism, in Kant’s view, is the “presumption” (*Anmaßung*) that reason can proceed according to principles “without first inquiring in what way and by what right it has obtained them” (CPR B xxxv). The purpose of critique, for Kant, is thus to challenge that presumption and to show *how* – under what conditions – reason’s (and the understanding’s) principles can be justified.⁸⁶ Yet it is not hard to see in this challenge to dogmatism a call to challenge the further presumption, made by the understanding, that distinct *categories* and *concepts* are, indeed, simply distinct. Kant’s failure to challenge the “dogmatism” of the understanding (in Hegel’s sense), and to undertake a radical critique of its categories, can thus be seen as a failure to carry his rejection of dogmatism, as *he* conceives it, to its logical conclusion: for Kant presupposes and holds on to the categorial and conceptual distinctions of the understanding “without first inquiring in what way and by what right he has obtained them”. By Kant’s own criterion, therefore, his conception of the categories rests on no more than a dogmatic (in his sense) “groundless assertion” (CPR B 22-3).

In Hegel’s view, his own radical critique of the categories of understanding is also made necessary by Kant’s commitment to *freedom*. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel notes that Kant promotes “the independence of the thinking that grasps itself”, which is “the principle of freedom”, and that he takes such freedom to require thought or “reason” to be “set free from all *authority*” (EL 107 / 145-6 [§ 60 R]). The freedom promoted by Kant thus permits nothing to have validity that is simply given, that is simply *found* to be there or to have this or that character. For Hegel, this means in turn that the judgement forms that are simply *found* in formal logic cannot provide a legitimate guide to the categories, as Kant claims (EL 84 / 116-17 [§ 42 R]). Indeed, free thought, as Hegel conceives it, may take *nothing whatsoever* on authority, be it the authority of tradition, formal logic or the understanding. Accordingly, it must derive the categories from the utterly indeterminate and empty being of thought (which is itself the indeterminate thought of being), not from judgement. Kant clearly does not draw this conclusion himself, but I agree with Hegel that his principle of freedom and autonomy requires him to do so.

I also agree with Hegel that such a presuppositionless derivation of the categories is required by Kant’s – indeed, any philosophical – commitment to *proof*. Hegel notes in his lectures on logic that, like Fichte’s thought, “the Kantian

philosophy also demands proofs [*Beweise*]; and Kant himself devotes several pages of the first *Critique* to considering the “proofs of transcendental and synthetic propositions” (LL 35 / 43, and CPR B 810 ff.). Yet Hegel points out that Kant’s philosophy “leaves proofs already by the wayside in its first beginnings”, since Kant derives the categories from what he presupposes – *without proof* – to be the basic activity of thought (namely, judgement) and, more specifically, from the “*various kinds of judgment* already specified empirically in the traditional logic” (LL 35 / 43, and EL 84 / 117 [§ 42 R]). Kant thus fails to demonstrate that thought must operate with these specific categories (rather than another set) and that they must be conceived in a certain way. Indeed, in the first *Critique* Kant himself admits that, ultimately, we cannot explain why understanding thinks “only by means of the categories and only through precisely this kind and number of them” and “why we have precisely these and no other functions for judgment” (any more than we can explain “why space and time are the sole forms of our possible intuition”) (CPR B 146).

By contrast, the “profound merit” of Fichte’s philosophy, in Hegel’s view, is to have reminded us “that the *thought-determinations*” – or categories – “must be exhibited in their *necessity*, and that it is essential for them to be *derived* [*abgeleitet*]”, that is to say, *proven* (EL 84 / 117 [§ 42 R]). Furthermore, Fichte actually attempts to carry out such a derivation in his *Wissenschaftslehre*. Categories are properly derived, Fichte maintains, when they are not just taken up “in the form in which they are already immediately applied to objects” (as he thinks occurs in Kant’s thought), but when they are developed “from the very nature of the intellect” and shown “to come into being gradually before the eyes of the reader or listener”.⁸⁷ As Hegel sees it, however, Fichte derives the categories from thought or intellect that is still one-sidedly subjective, namely thought as the activity of the “I” for which “the object has and retains the self-perpetuating determination of an *other*” (SL 54 / LS 67).⁸⁸ He, too, thus remains wedded to a conceptual distinction of the understanding that is not itself derived (see VGPW 3: 392); and so he, too, fails to *prove* in a satisfactory manner that thought must operate with specific categories.

Now Hegel does not deny that the process of deriving and proving the categories must have a starting point and that the latter, *as* the starting point, will not itself be derived. In that sense, any starting point will be unproven. Yet this does not undermine the necessity of the ensuing proof, if the starting point does not need to be proven in the first place. In Hegel’s view, if the starting point is determinate and “concrete” – as is the case with any distinction of the understanding – then it needs to be proven, and the failure to prove it leaves the ensuing proof resting on an unwarranted assumption and so deprives that proof of its necessity: “what is lacking if we make something concrete the beginning is the proof [*Beweis*] which the combination of the determinations contained in it requires” (SL 55 / LS 68). If, however, the starting point is utterly indeterminate

and empty, then the proof that it initiates rests on no unwarranted assumption and so is not deprived of its necessity by any such assumption. We still need to explain in more detail precisely *how* specific categories can be derived from an utterly indeterminate beginning, and we will do so later (in Part Two of this volume). The point to note here is simply this: if the derivation and proof of the categories is to be genuinely necessary, and is not to be undermined by resting on a mere assumption, then that proof may not begin from any determinate conception of thought (such as that of the understanding) that itself requires proof but lacks it. Such derivation of the categories must, therefore, begin from an indeterminate beginning that assumes nothing and so *requires no proof*. Kant's (and Fichte's) insistence that philosophy must prove and demonstrate the necessity of its insights thus leads directly to Hegel's thought that philosophy must take the form of presuppositionless speculative logic.⁸⁹

From Hegel's (or a Hegelian) perspective, therefore, his logic is made necessary by several aspects of Kant's thought: Kant's conception of critique and his rejection of dogmatism, his emphasis on freedom and his emphasis on proof. One might argue that Hegel errs in taking Kantian critique to point toward radical scepticism; but I think he is correct to argue, or to imply, that other Kantian commitments require thought to avoid unwarranted assumptions in the way he describes. In spite of the fact that one can question aspects of Hegel's interpretation of Kant, he is right, in my view, that his radically critical, presuppositionless logic is the logical outcome of taking Kant's commitments more seriously than Kant himself did.⁹⁰

Ameriks charges Hegel with showing no appreciation for "the Kantian idea of an argument that begins with certain commonsense presuppositions and then moves to unearth their dependence on various controversial principles that are to constitute a necessary conceptual framework".⁹¹ Yet Ameriks himself fails to appreciate the Hegelian argument that Kant's commitment to anti-dogmatism, freedom and proof prohibits thought from beginning with any presuppositions at all. Indeed, Ameriks fails to see that Kant himself implicitly sanctions the idea that we should start philosophy by suspending all presuppositions. In the introduction to the first *Critique* Kant states that, before carrying out a critique of pure reason and establishing what can be legitimately known a priori, and so what counts as legitimate "metaphysics", "one can and must regard as undone [*ungeschehen*] all attempts made until now to bring about a metaphysics *dogmatically*", that is, without a prior critique (CPR B 23). In other words, one must suspend the claims of previous metaphysics until we have discovered through critique which, if any of them, might be true. Moreover, he writes, "it also requires only a little self-denial in order to give up [*aufzugeben*] all these claims". Hegel may be said to take over this injunction to give up our unjustified metaphysical claims, and to extend it to the categories of the understanding – categories, whose "kind and number", by Kant's own

admission, cannot ultimately be explained and so are merely *presupposed* by him (CPR B 146).

Hegel is well aware that his logic is very different from Kant's "critical" philosophy; but he thinks that the logic of Kant's own position requires us to give up the understanding's conception of the categories, and indeed to give up the idea that thought operates with specific categories at all, and to examine thought from scratch, free from all presuppositions. This means, of course, that Hegel may not himself *presuppose* at the outset that thought is dialectical: a logic that is fully self-critical in Hegel's sense (but inspired in part by Kant) may begin with nothing more than the indeterminate being of thought. Equally, such a logic may not assume from the start, as Kant does, that thought is minimally judgement, or that form and matter, or subjective and objective, are definitively distinct concepts. Furthermore, it may not assume that thought is essentially discursive, and so not a form of intellectual intuition, and so not able to know *being as such* by itself. Indeed, as we have seen and shall see in more detail later, Hegel thinks that suspending all assumptions about thought actually makes it unavoidable that thought think and know being (1: 30, 107–10).⁹² This, for many, is a controversial thesis, but it is one that I stand by: Hegel is led to claim that pure thought *can*, and *does*, know being, not only (as we shall see) by the *Phenomenology*,⁹³ but also by what he regards as the *critical* imperative not to take for granted, but to suspend, the distinctions and oppositions of the understanding.

Hegel does not, therefore, just assert his claim dogmatically against Kant's more "humble" insistence that thought is limited. On the contrary, he points to a lingering dogmatism (in Kant's sense) in Kant's very "humility": for Kant *presumes* that thought is discursive and so cannot "intuit" being directly, without deriving such discursivity "from thought itself" (*aus dem Denken selbst*).⁹⁴ Hegel's critical suspension of this presumption then leads him to conclude that pure thought must be intellectual intuition after all (albeit not exactly in Kant's sense), which is why the *Logic* begins with "the empty intuition and thought" (*das leere Anschauen und Denken*) of being and nothing (SL 59 / LS 72).⁹⁵ Hegel thus reverts to the *pre*-Kantian, metaphysical idea that thought by itself can know being, because he is *more* radically critical than Kant, not *less* so – even though Kant himself would find this very hard to believe.

Hegel sees much to praise in Kant's thought besides the aspects we have highlighted. In particular, he writes,

Kant's concept of synthetic *a priori* judgments – the concept of *terms that are distinct* and yet equally *inseparable*; of an *identity* which is within itself an *inseparable difference* – belongs to what is great and imperishable in his philosophy.

Similarly, Hegel describes Kant's account of schematism and transcendental imagination as "one of the most beautiful sides of Kant's philosophy, through which pure sensibility and pure understanding, which were previously declared to be absolutely opposed in their difference [*absolut entgegengesetzte Verschiedene*], are united" (VGPW 3: 347-8). In both cases, therefore, Hegel credits Kant with insight into the speculative unity of opposites, even though he also accuses his predecessor of being essentially a thinker of the understanding.⁹⁶

Yet Hegel cannot be said simply to take over this idea of speculative unity from Kant. Indeed, he cannot be said, at the start of his logic, to take over – and extend or transform – *any* of Kant's positive ideas about cognition, even though he will endorse many of these ideas later in his philosophy. This is because Hegel takes himself principally to be extending to its logical conclusion, and so radicalizing, Kant's important, but inadequate, *critique* of the categories of understanding; and the genuine critique of the categories, for Hegel, may not begin with any determinate conception of thought *at all* (whether inherited from Kant, Aristotle or anyone else) but must be utterly presuppositionless. Hegel does, indeed, identify in Kant's thought ideas that he will be led by his distinctive method of thinking to endorse (including the idea with which we began chapter 1 in this volume, namely that categories turn perceptions into the experience of objects). Yet he may not ground his logic on such ideas: for, in his view, thinking critically and freely, as Kant insisted we should, means starting from the sheer indeterminate being of thought and then deriving further features of thought, such as its dialectical and speculative character, from that initial indeterminate being. In the next chapter, we will look more closely at the indeterminate beginning of Hegel's logic.

CHAPTER THREE

Logic without Presuppositions: the Beginning

REVIEW: FROM METAPHYSICS, VIA KANT, TO PRESUPPOSITIONLESS THOUGHT

Metaphysics is described by Hegel as “the way in which the *mere understanding* views the objects of reason” (EL 65 / 93 [§ 27]). It seeks to comprehend (what it takes to be) purely intelligible “objects” – such as the soul, the world as a “totality”, and God – through the one-sided categories of the understanding, and so aims to determine whether the soul is simple or composite and “whether the world is finite or infinite” (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28 R]). Yet, according to Hegel, metaphysicians, such as Christian Wolff, do not consider whether the understanding conceives of the categories properly and whether the latter are, indeed, simply *opposed* to their opposites, as the understanding contends. As Hegel writes, metaphysics never investigates “the peculiar content and validity of the determinations of the understanding”, and so it employs such “determinations” – the categories – uncritically (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28]).

Kant earns Hegel’s praise for being the first to undertake a critical examination of the understanding’s categories in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Yet Hegel regards Kant’s critique as inadequate because it fails, ultimately, to challenge the authority of the understanding. In contrast to metaphysics, Kant restricts the “objective validity” of the categories, as he conceives them, to objects of empirical experience (which he considers in turn to be mere “appearances”), but in so doing he retains, indeed sharpens, the categorial and other conceptual distinctions and oppositions of the understanding (such as form / matter and

subjective / objective).¹ Certain aspects of Kant's thought, such as the notion of a "synthetic a priori" judgement, implicitly point to the idea of the *unity* of distinct elements. Nonetheless, Kant remains fundamentally wedded to the understanding and its distinctions, and in that respect, despite his rejection of previous metaphysics, he continues to belong to the tradition of "metaphysical philosophizing" (SL 95 / LS 118).

According to Hegel, the "true critique" of the understanding's categories and concepts is provided by speculative logic (especially, but not only, by the "objective" logic, which contains the doctrines of "being" and "essence") (SL 42 / LS 51). This is because such logic demonstrates that the distinctions and oppositions conceived by the understanding are not definitive. Categories do, indeed, prove to be distinct from and opposed to one another, but they are also shown to turn dialectically into their opposites and then to be united with the latter.² Speculative logic thus undermines the simple "either / or" thinking that guides *metaphysics* by showing that categories such as the "finite" and the "infinite" in truth form a unity. In addition, such logic challenges the distinctions between "form" and "matter", and "subjective" and "objective", that underlie Kant's restriction of the categories (as subjective forms) to empirical objects or "appearances" – the restriction that is at the core of his inadequate "critique" of the categories. Through his speculative logic, therefore, Hegel exposes the limits of both metaphysical and Kantian thought.

Hegel's speculative logic also constitutes the "true critique" of the categories for another, more important, reason: namely, it is the most radical and thoroughgoing critique conceivable. Kant's critique rests on certain unquestioned assumptions made by the understanding (e.g. that form and matter, or thought and being, are simply distinct) and in this respect it is a dogmatic, question-begging critique. By contrast, Hegel's logic provides a thoroughly *non*-dogmatic and *non*-question-begging critique of the categories, because it begins by *suspending* all determinate assumptions about the latter. It does not assume at the outset that categories are simply opposed to one another *or* that they are dialectical; indeed, it does not assume that thought involves any specific categories at all (and so it cannot assume at the start the idea from which we began in this volume – namely that categories inform all our perception – though that idea will be proven later in Hegel's philosophy). Speculative logic is completely *presuppositionless* and for this reason is thoroughly non-dogmatic and critical. Such logic certainly proceeds to show that categories and concepts are dialectical; but it does so by starting from a conception of thought that contains no assumptions whatever and so is completely indeterminate. In Hegel's view, a less question-begging and more critical (and self-critical) starting point for philosophy cannot be conceived.³

Hegel thinks that his conception of critique extends Kant's conception to its logical conclusion, though, as I suggested above (1: 40), he appears to

misunderstand exactly what Kant means by “critique”. In fact, Hegel’s radical critique of the categories owes more to Cartesian (and Greek) scepticism, than to Kantian “critique” properly understood (see LL 71-2 / 83-4). Yet other aspects of Kant’s thought – his anti-dogmatism and his stress on freedom and proof – do implicitly point towards the thorough suspension of presuppositions with which Hegel begins his logic. In this sense, Hegel’s presuppositionless logic is at least in part the offspring of Kant’s philosophy.

Note, too, Kant’s insistence that, until we have established through critique (in his sense) which, if any, of the claims of metaphysics are true, we should exercise “a little self-denial” and “give up all these claims” (CPR B 24). Kant does not similarly advocate “giving up” our conception of the *categories* until that conception has been justified, partly because he does not think it can be justified: ultimately, he insists, we cannot explain why the understanding operates with precisely this “kind and number” of categories (or functions of judgement) (CPR B 146). By contrast, Hegel does advocate giving up our conception of the categories until their “kind and number” have been derived from thought itself. His presuppositionless logic can thus be understood to extend to the categories Kant’s cautious “self-denial”, if not Kantian “critique” in the strict sense.

For Robert Pippin, Hegel is a post-Kantian thinker for two principal reasons. First, he shares Kant’s belief in “the ineliminably reflexive or apperceptive” – that is, potentially *self-conscious* – “nature of any possible experience”; second, he follows Kant in seeing in the apperceptive nature of experience the key to discovering the conceptual conditions of the objects of cognition.⁴ In Pippin’s view, Hegel departs from Kant by rejecting the limitations the latter places on the categories of thought: for Hegel, the categories are the conditions, not just of the objects of human experience or “appearances”, but of “the intelligible experience of any object”, and so determine “all that objectivity could be”.⁵ Nonetheless, Hegel is indebted to Kant insofar as his project in the *Logic* takes its bearings from “a certain theory of *self-conscious subjectivity* and the relation between such a subject and any possible account of the conditions of knowledge”.⁶

In my view, Hegel is a post-Kantian thinker for a different reason: he takes to its most consistent extreme – in addition to Kant’s emphasis on proof – an aspect of Kant’s project that overlaps with that of Descartes (and the Greek sceptics), namely that of rejecting mere “authority” and dogmatism. In so doing, Hegel extends such anti-dogmatism – as Kant himself did not – to the categories and concepts of the understanding. Hegel is a post-Kantian thinker, therefore, because he undertakes a critique of the categories of thought that is as *non-dogmatic* as it is possible to be, since it presupposes nothing whatever about thought. As I have indicated, this means that Hegel does not assume at the outset that thought is understanding and judgement, or that it is dialectical. It also means, *pace* Pippin, that Hegel cannot presuppose that thought is potentially

self-conscious (even though he may well come to endorse a version of Kant's "apperception" thesis in the course of his philosophy). Hegel must begin the *Logic* with a conception of thought that is utterly indeterminate and empty.

Hegel's logic is indebted, not only to Kant, but also to the broader spirit of modern freedom. Such freedom, as Hegel conceives it, allows nothing simply given or presupposed to determine it, but it determines everything freely through itself; accordingly, "thinking that is free is without presuppositions" (EL 82 / 114 [§ 41 A1]). It is for this reason that Hegel takes Descartes' insistence on setting aside all assumptions to be a clear expression of modern freedom, even though Descartes does not explicitly emphasize freedom himself (see LHP 3: 109 / VGP 4: 93). Hegelian logic also satisfies the general philosophical demand that thought be self-critical. If philosophy involves questioning all received opinions, rather than simply acquiescing in face of them, then the logical conclusion is clearly that it should take nothing for granted, should assume nothing, at all. In this respect, Hegel's idea of a presuppositionless logic is simply the logical outcome of taking the project of philosophy as seriously as one can.

In my view, Hegel's claim that philosophy must be presuppositionless is correct: what alternative does one have as a self-critical thinker but to take nothing for granted? Others – influenced, perhaps, by Nietzsche, Heidegger or Gadamer – may dismiss as absurd the idea that one can suspend all one's assumptions; but then they have to content themselves with the thought – or, rather, assumption – that all thought rests, ultimately, on assumptions and assertions. This means in turn that they must content themselves with thinking less freely, less self-critically, and more dogmatically than Hegel recommends.⁷ I say thinking less self-critically "than Hegel recommends", not "than Hegel does", because we cannot know in advance whether Hegel's thought will actually live up to his own injunction and avoid arbitrary assumptions, or rather prove to be question-begging after all.

One of the most common strategies for criticizing Hegel is to claim that, despite his talk of thinking "without presuppositions", his philosophy is in fact guided throughout by all manner of hidden presuppositions. Versions of this charge are levelled against Hegel by Schelling, Feuerbach, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and, indeed, pretty much every post-Hegelian who has taken an interest in Hegel at all.⁸ The merits or otherwise of this charge, however, cannot be properly assessed until we consider the way speculative logic actually develops. The issue here, therefore, is a different one: it is not whether Hegel himself always succeeds in thinking without presuppositions, but whether he is right to insist that free, self-critical thought *should* think in this way. On this point I think that he is, indeed, right. As I see it, those who reject the idea that we should begin by taking nothing for granted thereby put themselves in the position of assuming – dogmatically – that all thought is

ultimately, and can only be, dogmatic. By contrast, Hegel refuses to make such a dogmatic assumption and instead takes the modern spirit of freedom and anti-dogmatism to its logical conclusion.

The aim of speculative logic is thus not to persuade others to endorse claims (for example, about dialectic) that Hegel already assumes – even if only implicitly – to be true. It is, rather, to *discover* what happens to thought when we suspend all assumptions about it. Does thought without presuppositions remain empty and indeterminate, or does it develop in some way? And if the latter, how does it develop? These are the questions speculative logic seeks to answer. It is very important to understand the project of speculative logic in this way. Hegel's strategy is not to presuppose a system worked out in advance and then to try to justify it by calling it "presuppositionless" (when it clearly isn't). His strategy is to suspend all assumptions about thought and then to discover what, if anything, emerges from an utterly indeterminate starting point. Speculative logic is thus a way of thinking characterized by radical *openness* – indeed, the most radical openness conceivable – and it may not, and in my view does not, have everything implicitly sewn up at the start.⁹ It does not, therefore, require us to commit ourselves in advance to metaphysical theses about the absolute, or to logical or epistemic theses about apperception, but it simply demands that we begin by giving up our cherished assumptions about thought – that we suspend, to start with, the ideas that thought involves judgement, that it must not be contradictory, and that it always rests on assumptions. Popper fears that Hegel's aim is to undermine rational argument;¹⁰ in fact his aim is much less troubling: to discover what it is to think, without being blinkered by the assumption that we already know.

BEGINNING WITH THE THOUGHT OF "PURE BEING"

Hegel states explicitly in both the *Encyclopaedia Logic* and the *Science of Logic* that philosophy or "science" – or, more precisely, its first part, speculative logic – must be presuppositionless. In the *Encyclopaedia*, for example, we read that, along with the presupposed distinction between immediacy and mediation, "all other presuppositions or prejudices must equally be given up when we enter into the science, whether they are taken from representation or from thinking"; science should thus be preceded by "total *presuppositionlessness*" (*die gänzliche Voraussetzungslosigkeit*) (EL 124 / 167-8 [§ 78 and R]). Similarly, in the *Science of Logic* Hegel writes that "the beginning must then be *absolute*, or what is synonymous here, must be an abstract beginning; so it may *presuppose nothing*, must not be mediated by anything or have a ground" (SL 48 / LS 58). The point of speculative logic is to consider *thought* and to discover what categories, if any, are inherent in it; so in that sense one can say that logic "presupposes"

thought, as opposed to feeling or sense perception.¹¹ (The *Phenomenology*, by contrast, examines the necessary shapes of consciousness, rather than thought.)¹² At the outset, however, nothing determinate may be assumed about thought itself; we may begin, therefore, with no more than thought as such, with “thought in its pure lack of determination [*Bestimmungslosigkeit*]” (EL 137 / 184 [§ 86 A1]).

Yet what precisely does this mean? It means that we must begin with what Hegel calls the sheer “simplicity of thinking” (*Einfachheit des Denkens*), and *nothing else* (EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R]). Such “simplicity” has no defining features and so is in fact no more than the simple, indeterminate *being* of thought. Speculative logic must begin, therefore, with the mere being of thought, or with thought conceived *as* mere being. Kant claims that thought or understanding “can be represented as a *faculty for judging*”, and he later identifies the formal or logical use of reason with the drawing of inferences (mediately through syllogisms) (CPR B 94, 355). We have also seen that Pippin’s Hegel takes thought to be essentially apperceptive. In Hegel’s own view, however, all such conceptions of thought are mere assumptions unless they are derived “from thought itself” (*aus dem Denken selbst*), that is, from the very least that thought can be (EL 84 / 117 [§ 42 R]). The least that thought can be is sheer indeterminate being – being that is not even identified *as* thought (as opposed to anything else). The starting point for logic must, therefore, be such indeterminate being: “*being, pure being* – without any further determination” (SL 59 / LS 71).

Such being is the being *of* thought, and it is conceived *by* thought, which – rather than, say, imagination – is, for Hegel, the “abstract element” of logic (EL 45/ 67 [§ 19]).¹³ The “being” with which logic begins is thus the least that thought can conceive *itself* to be, and so is the object of an abstract self-consciousness. As Hegel puts it, therefore, the beginning of logic is “made in the element of thought that is free and for itself [*für sich seiend*]”, and, indeed, “science” as a whole is “pure self-developing self-consciousness” (SL 29, 46 / LS 33, 57). At the outset, however, thought does not take itself explicitly to be self-conscious, but it takes itself to be no more than indeterminate being. The logic begins, therefore, with the thought of thought itself *as* simple being. Yet precisely because thought thinks of itself initially as no more than being, logic in fact begins with the bare thought or category of *being as such*. The category of pure *being* is thus the first that is inherent in thought, since it is simply the thought of thought’s own indeterminate being.

As we have seen, there are several reasons why, in Hegel’s view, philosophical thought must be presuppositionless: only in this way, he believes, can thought be truly self-critical, anti-dogmatic and free, and only in this way can it constitute a process of necessary proof that is not vitiated by having a determinate starting point that requires proof itself but lacks it (see 1: 41–3). Presuppositionless logic, however, must begin with the category of pure being. Accordingly, this

utterly indeterminate category must form the starting point for all thought that is truly self-critical, anti-dogmatic, free and committed to proof. Note that, for Hegel, this is the only option: any thought that begins by thinking of something more determinate than pure being – with a presupposition such as substance, apperception, or the law of non-contradiction, or will to power, history or *différance* – will inevitably be tainted with dogmatism. The only way to avoid dogmatism is to avoid starting from *any* determinate presupposition (about thought, being or anything else), and that means starting from the thought of *indeterminate* being.¹⁴

Or, to recapitulate what has been said in the previous paragraphs, it means starting with the simple being *of* thought; that is, with thought *as* sheer being; that is, with being *tout court*; that is, with the thought *of* such being. These characterizations do not yield different beginnings, but are simply different ways of conceiving of the same beginning – the one that is made necessary by the modern demand to think freely, and that, in Hegel's view, is the only beginning philosophy in the modern age may have.¹⁵

In the introduction to the *Science of Logic* Hegel provides two further reasons, apart from the ones already mentioned, why logic should begin in this indeterminate way. First, it is logic's task, in Hegel's view, to derive, and in the process to justify, the necessary categories and rules of thought; it cannot start, therefore, by assuming that it already knows what they are (or, indeed, that there are actually such categories and rules to be derived). In Hegel's words,

logic [. . .] cannot presuppose any of these forms of reflection, these rules and laws of thinking, for they are part of its content itself and they first have to be established within it.

—SL 23 / LS 25

One can presuppose categories and rules of thought in other activities, such as politics or physics; but it makes no sense, and is illegitimate, to presuppose them in logic, since the latter's specific purpose is to determine what the necessary categories and rules of thought are and (if there are any) how they are to be conceived. As Richard Winfield puts it, "logic is concerned with establishing what thinking is and is thinking about", and so "everything about it is up for grabs, is part of its own territory". Accordingly, "everything that is going to enter into its investigation is going to have to be established through its very own inquiry".¹⁶ At the start of logic, therefore, no categories, rules or principles can be *assumed* to belong to thought and to govern its activity; rather, thought must be conceived as indeterminate being (and so be the thought or category of such being).¹⁷

Second, logic must begin with indeterminate being because the very nature of *beginning*, properly understood, requires this. Hegel demonstrates this by

showing that nothing *determinate* or *concrete* can constitute the beginning. “What is determinate [*ein Bestimmtes*]”, Hegel writes, “contains an *other* to a first”; indeed, it is the other of that “first” (SL 50 / LS 62). This is because it gains its identity through a contrast with something else: it is this-*not-that*. The determinate is thus always mediated by another – it is what it is, thanks (at least in part) to that other – and as such it cannot be something immediate and original in its own right. It cannot, therefore, come first and be the absolute starting point. One might argue that the determinate could be “equiprimordial” with its mediating counterpart and in that sense could come first. Yet determinacy thereby remains *mediated*: it arises *through* a contrast and so, logically, is a result rather than a beginning. The beginning of logic, therefore, can be neither determinate, nor mediated, and so can only be “indeterminate immediacy” or indeterminate being (SL 59 / LS 71).

Hegel makes the same point about the “concrete”, that is, “anything containing a relation [*Beziehung*] *within itself*” between two (or more) elements (SL 52 / LS 64). Since the concrete contains such a relation, Hegel writes, it is not just one simple thing but contains “a first *and* an other”. Yet that means that it “already contains an advance [*Fortgegangensein*]” *from* a first *to* a second to which the first relates. Accordingly, the concrete, too, *results* from a relation, and so cannot be what comes first. Neither the determinate nor the concrete can be the beginning of logic, therefore, since they arise precisely through being other than or more than what comes first. The beginning of logic must thus be something wholly indeterminate, abstract and simple, something that is quite featureless (and so is not actually a “something” at all). As Hegel puts it, “that which constitutes the beginning, the beginning itself, is to be taken as something unanalyzable [*ein Nichtanalysierbares*], taken in its simple, unfilled immediacy; and therefore *as being*, as complete emptiness” (SL 52 / LS 65).

The modern imperative to think self-critically and freely requires us to abandon all determinate assumptions about thought and to begin from thought as sheer being. Yet the very idea of “beginning” also makes beginning with pure being necessary: for any other determinate or concrete beginning (with, say, thought as judgement or apperception) involves beginning from what is itself a *result*, that is, from a point at which we have in fact already begun. In Hegel’s view, indeed, reflection on the nature of beginning is sufficient by itself to move us to start logic with pure being: as he writes in the *Logic*, it “lies in the *nature of the beginning itself* that it should be being and nothing else. There is no need, therefore, of other preparations to enter philosophy, no need of further reflections or access points” (SL 50 / LS 62).

Several further consequences follow from what has just been said about “beginning”. First, we can see that there is a subtle difference between Hegel and Descartes, despite the similarity between them. Hegel endorses Descartes’ insistence that (as Hegel puts it) “one must make no presupposition” in thought

(VGPW 3: 128), but his aim in doing so is somewhat different from that of Descartes himself. As Hegel points out, Descartes sets aside all his presuppositions and opinions in order “to arrive at something firm [*etwas Festes*]” – or, in Descartes’ own vocabulary, something “unshakeable” (*inconcussum*) – which can then serve as the new foundation for knowledge.¹⁸ (In this respect, as in others, Descartes is not explicitly interested in *freedom*.)¹⁹ By contrast, Hegel is seeking, not a solid foundation or “ground” for knowledge, but a mere beginning. In Hegel’s view, the beginning of logic must be indeterminate being, but conversely such being is itself no more than the *beginning*. As such, it does not need to be “firm” or “unshakeable”; and in fact, as we soon learn, it proves to be far from firm by immediately vanishing into nothing (SL 59 / LS 71-2). The category of pure being “grounds” Hegel’s philosophical system insofar as it gives rise to all other categories; it does so, however, by turning into its opposite and so immediately negating itself. The development of Hegel’s system (as he puts it in the preface to the *Phenomenology*) thus demonstrates that the “ground” (*Grund*) or principle of the system is not actually its *ground* at all, but “is, in fact, only its *beginning* [*Anfang*]” (PS 14 / 18).

Second, although pure being at the start of logic is simple and immediate, as well as utterly indeterminate, it may not be conceived or defined explicitly as “immediacy” or as “indeterminacy”. This is because such a conception would, paradoxically, turn it into the very thing it is not supposed to be, namely something mediated and determinate. In the *Logic* Hegel certainly talks of being’s “indeterminate immediacy”; but he also reminds us that the expression “simple immediacy” (*einfache Unmittelbarkeit*) is “an expression of reflection” that “refers to the distinction from what is mediated” (SL 47 / LS 58). To conceive being explicitly as “immediacy”, therefore, is to conceive it as the explicit negation or absence of mediation – as “*im*-mediacy” – and so is to build into such being the fact that it is *not mediated*. Yet this confers a determinate and mediated character on being: for it turns being into that which is what it is only through not being something else. Being, conceived in this way, however, cannot come first, as we have just seen, and so cannot be the beginning of speculative logic. This is not to deny that the pure being with which logic begins is simple and *immediate* and so without any mediating relation to anything else: as Hegel puts it, pure being is “not unequal with respect to another; it has no difference within it, nor any outwardly” (SL 59 / LS 71). Yet precisely because it *is* simple and immediate, it cannot be understood as “immediacy”: it must lack all mediation, but for that very reason it cannot consist in the explicit absence or negation of mediation, in explicit non-mediation or “*im*-mediacy”. “The true expression of this simple immediacy”, Hegel writes, “is therefore *pure being*”, without any further qualification (SL 47 / LS 58).

In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel makes a similar point about being’s indeterminacy. In § 86 he states that pure being “is the indeterminate, simple

immediate”, but in the first of the two following additions he explains that this does not mean that being should be understood *as* the explicit negation or “sublation” of determinacy:

That which lacks determination, as we have it here, is the immediate, not a mediated lack of determination, not the sublation [*Aufhebung*] of all determinacy, but the lack of determination in all its immediacy, what lacks determination prior to all determinacy, what lacks determinacy because it stands at the very beginning. But this is what we call “being”.

—EL 136-7 / 182-4

Pure being at the start of logic must, indeed, lack all determination and so *be* utterly indeterminate; but for that reason it cannot be conceived *as* “in-determinacy”, that is, as non-determinacy, for it would then be turned into the determinate negation of determinacy and so would not be indeterminate after all. As such, it could not be the beginning of logic. The beginning may contain no determinate assumptions whatever about thought, and so must be completely presuppositionless; accordingly, it must be utterly immediate and indeterminate; this in turns means that it must be pure and simple *being* “without any further determination” (including that of being explicitly “in-determinate”).

Hegel acknowledges that when determinate being or “existence” (*Dasein*) eventually emerges from pure being, the latter proves to be indeterminate-as-*opposed-to-determinate* and so turns into what we can call determinate indeterminacy. As Hegel writes, “*determinate* being, however, comes to stand [*tritt*] over against being as such”, so that “the very indeterminateness of being constitutes its quality” (SL 58 / LS 71). At this point, therefore, pure being can be conceived explicitly as “in-determinacy”. Yet pure being comes to be determinately indeterminate only *through* the emergence of determinate being, that is, through the mediation of and in relation to the latter. At the start, by contrast, before any determinate being has arisen, pure being stands on its own and is not contrasted with, or conceived as the “negation” of, determinacy. Accordingly, it cannot be conceived explicitly (and determinately) as “in-determinacy”, but it must be *utterly indeterminate*. As such, it must be pure and simple *being*.²⁰

The third – and by now, I trust, obvious – consequence to be drawn from Hegel’s remarks on “beginning” is that speculative logic cannot begin from the concepts of “God” or the “Absolute”. In a notorious passage from the introduction to the *Logic* Hegel states that logic is “*the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit*”, and later in the text he maintains that “*God would have the most undisputed right that the beginning be made with him*” (SL 29, 55 / LS 33-4, 68). This “right”

is based on the fact that, at the culmination of logic, being proves to be self-determining reason or what Hegel calls the “Idea” and this Idea is in turn pictured by religion as “God”. Being turns out, therefore, to be in truth the “divine” rationality that is immanent within nature and human history – “the logos, the reason of that which is” (SL 19 / LS 19) – and so one might expect logic and philosophy to begin with the thought of God. The thought of God, however, is a complex one that combines many different elements, and so is one that we reach only by moving from one element to another and another and gathering them all together. It is thus, like all complex or “concrete” thoughts, the *result* of having begun somewhere and moved on, and so it cannot itself constitute the very beginning of thought. For Hegel, “the determination which *first* emerges in knowing is”, and must be, “something simple, for only in what is simple is there nothing more than the pure beginning”; furthermore, “only the immediate” – or pure being – “is simple, for it is only in the immediate that no advance is yet made from one thing to an other” (SL 55 / LS 68).²¹ Accordingly, even though “God” is what being proves in truth to be, logic must start with pure being, not with “God”, and whatever there is in the thought of God that is “*more* than there is in pure being” must “*emerge*” (*hervortreten*) from pure being itself. Philosophy, in Hegel’s view, does not start with the idea of “God” (and then, perhaps, consider whether God exists); but it starts from the thought of being, indeed with being itself, and shows that being, when properly understood, itself proves to be divine.²²

The same reasoning prevents the “Absolute” from forming the starting point of logic. This should be specifically born in mind when we read Hegel’s statement in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* that the categories “may be looked upon as definitions of the Absolute” (EL 135 / 181 [§ 85]).²³ This statement makes it look as though Hegel begins by presupposing an entity called the “Absolute” and then attaches different categories to it as its defining predicates (in the manner of pre-Kantian metaphysics). In view of what he says about beginning, however, this cannot be what he is doing, and the impression created by his statement is misleading. Hegel’s logic does not start with the Absolute and then proceed to define it in various ways, but it starts with pure being and then shows that such being turns out to be, or *turns into*, the Absolute (on the way to proving to be the Idea or “God”).²⁴ As Frederick Beiser rightly notes, Hegel “insists that the absolute should be the *result*, not the *starting point*, of doing philosophy”.²⁵

Fourth (and finally), Hegel’s conception of beginning means that logic cannot begin with the concept of “beginning” (*Anfang*) itself. This might appear surprising, but it follows from what has been said so far. In the *Logic* Hegel considers the concept of “beginning” and argues that it contains “the unity of being and nothing”. As he puts it, in the “representation [*Vorstellung*] of a mere beginning as such”,

as yet there is nothing, and something is supposed to become. The beginning is not pure nothing but a nothing, rather, from which something is to proceed; also being, therefore, is already contained in the beginning.

—SL 51 / LS 63

In saying this, however, Hegel shows precisely why the concept (or representation) of “beginning” cannot itself be the beginning of logic. The problem is that the concept of “beginning” points beyond itself to something that is to arise from it. A “beginning”, as such, is thus not something simple in its own right, but is the beginning *of* something. The latter is not yet there, since it is just beginning; yet it is on the way, since it is, indeed, beginning. To begin with the concept of “beginning”, therefore, is in fact already to be beyond the beginning, and so *already to have begun*, since it is already to know that the beginning is the coming-to-be of something that is not yet there.

If, however, the beginning is to be *merely* the beginning, and no more than that, it cannot already contain the thought of what is to follow, of what is to come. That means that it cannot be thought at the start to be the beginning *of* something; and that in turn means that it cannot be conceived explicitly as a “beginning” at all. The beginning that is no more than that must simply be an immediacy – pure being – with no thought whatever that it is the “beginning” of anything. Once we have begun, if something then emerges, we can obviously understand the beginning retrospectively to be the beginning of that something; so, *after* the beginning the latter can come to be conceived explicitly *as* the “beginning”. Yet at the beginning itself, before we have progressed any further, we cannot look beyond what we start with: we cannot anticipate something that will arise only after we have begun, for we would then be placing ourselves not just *at* the beginning but also *beyond* it. We must start, therefore, with pure being that is no more than that and is not conceived as the “beginning” of anything to come.

The concept of “beginning” is thus subject to the same problem as the concepts of “indeterminacy” and “immediacy”. A thoroughly free, self-critical and presuppositionless logic must begin with a thought that is indeterminate and immediate; this thought, however, cannot be the explicit thought of “indeterminacy” or “immediacy”, since these are both determinate and mediated; logic must begin, therefore, with the indeterminate thought of pure being. Similarly, if the beginning of logic is to be no more than the *beginning*, then it cannot be made with the concept of “beginning” itself (which already points beyond the beginning), but again must be the thought of pure being. Whichever way you look at it, therefore, speculative logic must begin with “*being, pure being* – without any further determination” (SL 59 / LS 71). “This insight”, Hegel writes, “is itself so simple that this beginning as such is in no need of any preparation or further introduction” (SL 55 / LS 68).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Method of Speculative Logic

THOUGHT'S PASSIVITY

The purpose of speculative logic is to examine, and disclose the nature of, thought without making prior assumptions about it. Accordingly, such logic may start from nothing more than thought's simple being. Equally, when it turns to consider such being more closely, speculative logic may presuppose none of the familiar "rules and laws of thinking", such as the traditional forms of the syllogism and the laws of identity and non-contradiction (SL 23 / LS 25). Yet this leaves us in something of a quandary: for if there are no rules of thought to guide us, how are we to think when we consider pure being? What are we to do? What is the *method* of speculative logic to be?

Hegel's answer in one passage is as follows: we are "simply to take up [*aufzunehmen*] *what is there before us*" – namely, pure being – while "setting aside all reflections and all opinions that we otherwise have" (SL 47 / LS 58).¹ These words by no means completely clarify the method of speculative logic; but they indicate what we may *not* do, and that in turn throws light on what we should be doing. In speculative logic we may not base our consideration of being on our own "reflections" and "opinions"; that is to say, we may not ground any further thoughts about being on principles or beliefs that we happen to have. Further thoughts about being, if there are to be any, can therefore have only one source: *pure being itself*. Two pages on from the lines just quoted Hegel states that "the *advance* [*Fortgang*] from that which constitutes the beginning is to be considered only as a further determination of it" (SL 49 / LS 60).² It is important to note, however, that it is not *we* who are to carry out this "further determination" of being. If more is to be said about being – than that

it is pure being – then that “more” must arise because being determines *itself* in our thinking. As Hegel puts it, it is not our thinking about being or our “argumentation” (*Räsonnement*) that takes logic forward, but “it can only be *the nature of the content* that *moves* itself in scientific knowing” (SL 9-10 / LS 6). At the start, we do not know whether being will determine itself or not; we know, however, that whatever else being may be thought to be – beyond simple being – must be introduced into thought by being itself.

The method of speculative logic, or “pure knowing” (SL 47 / LS 57), thus consists, not in doing something or thinking in a certain way ourselves, but in letting pure being be what it is and determine itself as it may. In other words, “if pure being is taken as the *content* of pure knowing, then the latter must step back from its content, allowing it free play without determining it further [*ihn für sich selbst gewähren zu lassen und nicht weiter zu bestimmen*]” (SL 50 / LS 62). Unlike Heidegger, Hegel is not often thought of as someone who equates true thinking with “letting”; yet at various places in his work he emphasizes that speculative thought *lets* its subject-matter hold sway, or have “free play”, and develop of its own accord. In the preface to the *Phenomenology* – which is in fact a preface to his whole system – he notes that “science” requires that we “sink” our freedom “in the content, letting it move itself through its own nature” (*ihn durch seine eigne Natur [. . .] sich bewegen zu lassen*), and that we simply “contemplate this movement” (PS 36 / 44); and in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* he states (or is reported to state) that

when I think, I give up my subjective particularity, sink myself in the matter, let thought follow its own course [*lasse das Denken für sich gewähren*]; and I think badly whenever I add something of my own.

—EL 58 / 84 [§ 24 A2]³

“Letting” is thus not just a peripheral feature of speculative thought but lies at its core. Indeed, the distinctive *method* of such thought is, precisely, to *let* its content – pure being – hold sway and to let itself be guided by whatever such being proves to be. Speculative thought requires us, therefore, to adopt a stance of *passivity* towards pure being (and towards the Idea that being eventually proves to be), as Hegel makes clear in these lines from the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

Philosophical thinking proceeds analytically in that it simply takes up its object, the Idea, and lets it go its own way [*dieselbe gewähren läßt*], while it simply watches the movement and development of it, so to speak. To this extent philosophising is wholly passive [*passiv*].

—EL 305 / 390 [§ 238 A]⁴

Such passivity is different from what we usually take philosophical thinking to be. We normally assume that such thinking is something *we* carry out on the

basis of principles and beliefs that we adhere to: starting from the latter, *we* actively formulate arguments leading to judgements that we then make on this or that topic. Yet we also acknowledge that our principles and beliefs (or what we take to be the “facts” of the matter) provide compelling grounds or “reasons” for arguing or judging in a specific way. We thus take ourselves to be *required* by such reasons – or by reason as such – to formulate certain arguments and judgements; and, indeed, we regard ourselves as rational only insofar as we follow where such reasons lead us. There is, therefore, a strong element of passivity even in the activity of thinking and reasoning as we usually understand it.⁵

This is especially the case for “rationalist” philosophers, such as Descartes and Spinoza. In his fifth Meditation, for example, Descartes sets out his version of the ontological proof of God’s existence by arguing that the latter follows directly “from the fact that I cannot think of God except as existing”. He goes on to state that this is not simply a conclusion *he* draws on the basis of *his* conception of God, but that he is compelled to draw it by the concept of God, or rather “the existence of God”, itself. In this sense, he takes himself to be passive in the face of what he is thinking. As Descartes puts it, it is not his own thought that requires God to exist or that “imposes any necessity on any thing”; but

on the contrary, it is the necessity of the thing itself, namely the existence of God, which determines my thinking in this respect. For I am not free to think of God without existence (that is, a supremely perfect being without a supreme perfection) as I am free to imagine a horse with or without wings.⁶

The significant point here is not whether Descartes’ specific argument about God is correct. It is that he understands being rational to involve being constrained by, and in that sense being passive before, the matter at hand: for this shows that such passivity is regarded as central to rational thought long before Hegel insisted on it. What makes Hegel’s insistence new is that he starts, not from “God” or from any other determinate principle, but from a thought that is presuppositionless and so indeterminate (though even in this respect his thinking is prefigured – imperfectly – by that of Descartes [see 1: 15]). For Hegel, philosophical thought – or, more precisely, speculative logic – involves holding oneself open to, and being passive before, pure indeterminate being; there is initially nothing more to the “method” of such thought than that.

Now, for Descartes, being rational and “passive” in one’s thinking means allowing one’s thought to be determined by “the *necessity* of the thing itself” (emphasis added). This cannot be true for Hegel at the very start of logic, since pure being, as utterly indeterminate, contains no such “necessity”. It becomes

true, however, as the category of being determines itself in our thinking of it and generates a series of further categories: for such self-determination is itself “the development of thought” – and of being – “in its necessity” (SL 19 / LS 19). As the category of being determines itself, therefore, our thought – like Descartes’ – comes to be determined, and required to move along a certain path, by the “necessity of the thing itself”.

Indeed, for Hegel, it is only in such self-determination that true necessity is to be found. Hegel notes in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* that “subjective reason” – ordinary, non-speculative reason – often demands that thought have the form of “necessity”: it demands that concepts and judgements be derived and proven, rather than just asserted. At the same time, however, it bases itself on what is not derived or proven but merely “*immediate, found, or presupposed*”, that is, on “contingent [*zufällig*] assertions, against which the opposite assurances could be made with the same right”. Accordingly, in ordinary reasoning “the form of necessity fails to get its due” (EL 33-4 / 52-3 [§§ 9-10]). The way to secure necessity in thought, therefore, is to set out a process of logical derivation that is free from the influence of contingent assumptions. To do this, we have first to set aside all such assumptions and begin with a thought that is utterly indeterminate, namely pure being; and we have then to follow the immanent development of such a thought, and immanent derivation of further categories, in which no external, contingent assumptions play a role. Genuine *necessity* in thought thus coincides, in Hegel’s view, with purely *immanent* development and derivation (see SL 12, 34 / LS 9, 40); or, as he also puts it, “in philosophy, ‘proving’ [*beweisen*] amounts to exhibiting how the object makes itself what it is through and of itself” (EL 134 / 179-80 [§ 83 A]).

Since immanence consists in developing of one’s own accord without external influence, or in pure self-determination, it is, of course, identical to freedom. In speculative logic, as Hegel conceives it, therefore, genuine necessity and genuine freedom coincide (see e.g. EL 39 / 59 [§ 14]). The demands that thought be radically free and that it be capable of genuine proof both require that philosophy begin with no determinate assumptions. This is because such assumptions would be simply given and thus set a limit to thought’s freedom, and would require proof but, as the ground of proof themselves, be incapable of receiving it (see e.g. 1: 41–3). Now we see that freedom in thought and genuine proof and necessity coincide in another way: for both are to be found only in the purely *immanent* development of indeterminate being.

As we shall see (1: 138), the category of pure being develops by first turning dialectically into its opposite: *nothing*. Further dialectical transitions then yield other, more determinate categories. Each category develops according to its own specific dialectic, and there is no single pattern that is (or should be) exemplified by each one: dialectical development does not consist in the “repetition of the same formula” (PS 9 / 12).⁷ (Some categories, for example,

such as reality and negation, and being-in-itself and being-for-other, do not turn directly *into* one another, as being and nothing or determination and constitution do, but undermine their one-sidedness – and so are dialectical – in other ways [see 1: 166–7, 190].) Yet the different categories together form an articulated sequence with an overall logical, dialectical “rhythm”. This rhythm is the way in which speculative logic necessarily proceeds, and it thereby lays down the developed *method* that is to be followed by the logician (see SL 33 / LS 39).

The method of logic is the way in which the logician is to think, starting from pure being, and we now see that this method actually has *two* components to it. First, it involves simply focussing on pure being and letting it hold sway, letting it develop as it may. Second, however, it involves letting one’s thought be determined by, and so thinking along with, the *dialectical* development of being. In its fuller sense, therefore, the method of speculative logic – the way in which we are to think in such logic – is dialectical.⁸ Yet one should bear in mind that this dialectical method is not devised by us prior to logic and then “applied” to being and subsequent categories. This method *may not* be devised prior to logic, since logic must be presuppositionless; but it also *cannot* be devised prior to logic, for dialectic itself belongs wholly to the “content” that is being thought, that is, to pure being and the categories that emerge from it. As Hegel puts it, dialectic is “the content in itself, *the dialectic which it possesses within itself*” (SL 33 / LS 39), and it changes its character as the content changes. Dialectical method in logic cannot, therefore, be separated from the content of logic – the categories – and “applied” to some other content, such as nature or history; dialectic is in each case unique to a category and inseparable from it. This is not to deny that both nature and history will themselves be conceived as dialectical later in Hegel’s system; but they will exhibit their *own* distinctive dialectic that incorporates, but is not precisely the same as, that of pure logic.

Hegel concedes that his own presentation of speculative logic may not be perfect but may be capable “of much elaboration in detail”, and he asks “fair-minded” judges of the first edition of the *Logic* (1812) in particular to take account of the fact that he has been “unable to give this attempt [*Versuch*] a greater perfection” (SL 9, 33 / LS 6, 39). Indeed, even in the preface to the second, expanded edition (1832), recalling that Plato is said to have revised his books on the state “seven times”, Hegel regrets that he did not have the leisure to revise his logic “seven and seventy times over” (SL 21 / LS 22). Yet he also insists that the dialectical *method* he follows in his system of logic, “or rather the method that this system itself follows”, is “the one and only true method”, and that the standpoint of speculative logic is “the only true standpoint, on which in future it must always [*für immer*] be based” (SL 28, 33 / LS 31-2, 39). This is because, as just noted, dialectical method is “not something distinct from its object [*Gegenstand*] and content” but is the method made necessary *by*

that content. It is the only true method for thinking being because it is the very “course of the subject matter itself” (*Gang der Sache selbst*) (SL 33 / LS 39).

It is crucial to recognize here that dialectic is not *Hegel's* method of thinking. Hegel does not come to pure being armed with his own preconceived idea of dialectic and ready to subject every category to the latter's contortions. In declaring dialectic to be “the one and only true method”, therefore, he is not arrogantly putting beyond criticism a method of his own devising. On the contrary, he is submitting himself, in an act of philosophical humility, to the method made necessary by the matter at hand (and he thereby takes to its logical conclusion the idea that rational beings should submit to the demands of reason).⁹ The first component of speculative method is to suspend all preconceptions about thought, being and method, and to focus on pure indeterminate being, letting it hold sway. The method of *dialectic* is then the one that is determined by pure being; it thus belongs to the content arising from the latter, not to Hegel or anyone else. *That* is why it is the only method for that content, the only true method. Any other method would have to be external to that content and so, in relation to the latter, would be no more than a mere assumption and so illegitimate.

Many philosophers, including Descartes and Spinoza, share Hegel's view that the way in which we begin philosophy and the method we follow in the latter are crucial to finding the truth. On this view, the truth does not just hit us in the face, but it is disclosed only when we think in the right way. Hegel is, however, unique in recognizing that the “right way” to think must be determined by the matter at hand alone *and* that that matter itself must initially be indeterminate. The right way to think, or “the absolute method of cognition”, for Hegel, is thus to be determined solely by the “immanent development” of that indeterminate starting point (SL 10 / LS 7).¹⁰ The method of speculative logic is, indeed, the way *we* must think in such logic: as Hegel puts it, it is “the method that I follow in this system of logic” (SL 33 / LS 39). Yet it is ultimately not *our* method, or *mine*, at all, but the method made necessary by the content we are thinking: the one “that this system itself follows”. In following the “absolute method” of speculative logic, therefore, I am in fact just recognizing, and bringing to consciousness, the way in which the content of logic – being and the subsequent categories – develops of its own accord; or, in Hegel's words, our method in logic is simply our “consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic” (SL 33 / LS 38). Accordingly, there is no dialectical method that can be specified in advance of speculative logic and whose rules can be learned before we turn our attention to the categories of thought. The method of such logic must rather emerge as pure being develops and determines itself in our thinking of it. Indeed, Hegel writes, it is only by following such a “self-constructing path” that logic, and philosophy more broadly, can be “objective, demonstrated science” (SL 10 / LS 7).¹¹

THE PROBLEM OF JUDGEMENT

Hegel insists that the method of speculative logic is altogether a “new concept of scientific procedure” (SL 9 / LS 6), and it is clearly different from the method of pre-Kantian metaphysics (as Hegel conceives the latter). As we have seen (1: 8), such metaphysics begins with supposed “objects” of pure reason, such as the soul, the world as a whole, and God, which it regards as “*ready-made, given subjects*”, and it takes its task to lie in determining their nature through attributing the correct predicates to them in judgements. Accordingly, it judges that the soul is “simple” or “composite”, or that God is “eternal”, and so on (EL 66, 68 / 94, 97 [§§ 28 and R, 30]).

Hegel states that the “criterion” (*Maßstab*), employed by different metaphysicians in their attribution of predicates to objects of reason, is the particular conception or “representation” (*Vorstellung*) they already have of such objects: “in this account of God from the point of view of the understanding, what counts above all is which predicates agree or not with what *we represent to ourselves* as ‘God’” (EL 73 / 103 [§ 36 R]). So what metaphysicians judge God or the soul to be depends on what they have previously assumed or defined them to be. In Hegel’s view, there are two problems with this way of proceeding.¹²

First, the procedure of metaphysics is unfree and uncritical because its understanding of its objects rests on what is *given* to it (for example, by tradition or by Church dogma) or on the mere “*assurance* that by one word one thinks precisely this” rather than something else, that is, on definitions and stipulations (EL 70 / 99 [§ 33]). Second, however, that procedure also unwittingly deprives the objects of metaphysics of the firm, “ready-made” determinacy that they (and our representations of them) are initially assumed to have: for it assumes in turn that such objects “receive their firm determination only through thinking”, that is, only through judgement and predication (EL 69 / 97 [§ 31]). On the one hand, when we judge that “God is eternal”, we begin with (what we take to be) the determinate representation “God” and this serves as the criterion for our judgement; we are thus right to judge God to be eternal, if “eternity” belongs to, or is at least compatible with, our prior representation of him. (In this sense, our judgement is guided by, and passive before, the conception of God from which we start.) On the other hand, however, before we have explicitly recognized through a judgement that God is eternal, “what he *is*, is not yet *known*”; what we have initially is thus in fact an underdetermined representation of God, and “only the predicate” of the explicit judgement we go on to make “states expressly what he *is*”. (In this sense, what is to be understood by “God” in the first place is determined – to a significant degree – by our activity of judgement.) So our initial representation of God is meant to provide a “firm hold” (*festen Halt*) for our judgement; but such judgement implicitly undermines that firm hold, since it is itself what first renders our representation firmly determinate (EL 68-9 / 97 [§ 31 and R]).

In Hegel's view, this second problem inevitably besets the metaphysical mode of thought. The objects of metaphysics are purely intelligible objects, not things that are given to us in empirical experience, so we cannot base our ideas of God or the soul on what we see around us, as we can in the case of the trees in our garden. In thinking about God or the soul, therefore, we must begin from a representation of them – produced by thought or imagination – which will then provide the criterion for our judgements about them. Yet it is only through such judgements, in which the predicates of God or the soul are identified, that we have a firmly *determinate* representation of the latter in the first place. Our initial representation of God is thus not as firm and determinate as we take it to be; but this means that the judgements we make on the basis of that representation are not as well grounded as we think, either. The metaphysical mode of thinking bases its judgements on representations that are themselves rendered firmly determinate *by* those judgements; both the judgements and the representations, therefore, are left hanging in the air without a firm ground.¹³

Speculative logic avoids this problem by starting from a thought that is not meant to be firmly determinate but that is utterly indeterminate: the thought of pure being. Furthermore, it does not proceed by attributing predicates to such being in judgements, but it simply allows being freely to determine itself in our thinking. It does not, therefore, get entangled in the problem we have just highlighted.

Indeed, Hegel emphasizes in several texts that speculative, dialectical thought and thought in the form of *judgement* are very different from one another. Leaving to one side the problem, just noted, affecting metaphysical judgement, the simple form of any judgement (*Urteil*) or ordinary proposition (*Satz*) – S is P (or S is not P) – indicates that it is a statement *about* something given or presupposed.¹⁴ This is because it sets its subject (S) *apart* from the predicate (P) that it attaches to the latter (or, in the case of a negative judgement, detaches from the latter). In so doing, the judgement presents the predicate in turn as something distinct from the subject, so “judgment has in general totalities for its sides, totalities that are at first essentially self-subsistent [*selbständig*]”. Understood properly, the affirmative judgement also declares that its subject and predicate form an inseparable *unity* – a unity expressed in the copula “is”, which “indicates that the predicate belongs to the *being* of the subject and is not merely externally combined with it”. Yet the form of such a judgement remains at odds with this unity, precisely because it separates the subject and predicate (and, indeed, the copula) from one another both logically and grammatically (SL 552 / LB 60-1).

As Hegel explains, this separation prompts ordinary representational thought (*Vorstellung*) to regard the subject and predicate in a judgement as completely external to one another. From the “subjective” standpoint of representation,

“the act of judgment accordingly brings with it the further reflection whether this or that predicate which is in someone’s *head* can and should be *attached* to the object that exists *outside* it on its own” (SL 552 / LB 60-1). A similar, if perhaps not quite so subjective, view of judgement is attributed by Hegel to metaphysics. The procedure of metaphysics, he writes, “was to *attach* predicates to the object of cognition, e.g. to God. This then is an external reflection about the object, since the determinations (the predicates) are found ready-made in my representation, and are attached to the object in a merely external way” (even if, from another perspective, such predication is also guided – or meant to be guided – *by* the conception of God from which we start) (EL 67 / 96 [§ 28 A]).

Speculative thought is quite different from metaphysical (and from ordinary, representational) judgement, since it does not presuppose a “ready-made” subject and attach separate, “ready-made” predicates to it externally. As already noted, such thought begins from an utterly indeterminate thought and then simply follows the immanent development, or self-determination, of that thought itself. It thus has a very different conception from metaphysics (and from ordinary “reasoning”) of the “subject” of thought in its two distinct senses.

First, whereas the *knowing* subject in metaphysics takes itself to be engaged in the *activity* of judgement (even if in certain respects it understands itself to be guided by God or another subject-matter), the knowing subject in speculative thought conceives of itself primarily as *passive*, rather than active. Hegel indicates this through his insistence that such thought should “sink” (*versenken*) itself in the content before it and “let” that content “hold sway” (see e.g. PS 36 / 43-4). It is crucial to recognize that this is not mere rhetoric on Hegel’s part. Hegel means what he says: in speculative logic we think the true nature of something, only when we allow our thought to be guided and determined *by* that thing, that category, itself.¹⁵

Second, whereas the subject, or subject-matter, *known* in metaphysics is taken to be a given subject with a firm, settled identity (even if, from another viewpoint, it first acquires its firm identity through the activity of judgement), the subject-matter of speculative thought is not firm and settled at all, but is dynamic and self-moving. Indeed, its dynamic character is evident right from the start: it is initially pure being, but this immediately vanishes into nothing, which then vanishes in turn into pure being, such that both being and nothing prove to be nothing but such vanishing (see SL 59-60 / LS 71-2). This vanishing, which Hegel calls “becoming”, then mutates logically into further categories, including determinate being, something, finitude, and so on. Each category is a new one with a new logical structure; but each is equally a further determination of pure being. By giving rise to new categories, being – which is the initial subject-matter – thus proves to be the *process* of its own immanent development. Hegel sometimes describes this development as the “self-movement of the

concept [*Begriff*]" (PS 44 / 52), since later in the *Logic*, after it has traversed the logics of being and essence, pure being proves to be "concept".¹⁶ At the start, however, being is not yet concept (or Idea) but pure being; the development to which it gives rise is thus better described, while it is actually going on, as the "movement of being itself" (*Bewegung des Seins selbst*) (SL 56 / LS 69).

In this movement, being continues uninterrupted, since each new category is a further determination of it. Yet it continues precisely by turning into *new* categories that are more than just pure being. The subject-matter of speculative logic does not, therefore, remain firm and settled, but changes before our eyes as new determinations of it emerge. In a more conventional philosophical text, such as Leibniz's *Monadology* (1714), the subject-matter remains unaltered throughout: at the start of Leibniz's great work we are told that the monad is "nothing but a simple substance", and by the end it has not come to be anything different (though, of course, we now know a lot more about it).¹⁷ In the course of Hegel's *Logic*, by contrast, pure being does come to be something different; indeed, it mutates through a whole series of different forms. The ground on which one stands at the start of the *Logic* is thus constantly shifting, though in a rational, necessary, immanently determined manner.

Hegel draws particular attention to this distinction between (on the one hand) a firm and settled and (on the other) a dynamic subject-matter of thought in the preface to the *Phenomenology*. What he calls "ratiocinative" (*räsonnierend*) thinking – the thinking we encounter in ordinary life, as well as in metaphysics – usually assumes that it confronts some definite, given subject-matter to which predicates can be attached in judgements. This subject-matter is what our thinking is *about*; or, as Hegel puts it, it is the "basis to which the content" – the predicates or "accidents" of the matter concerned – "is attached, and upon which the movement" – of judging and reasoning – "runs back and forth". Things are different, however, in speculative thinking, since what we are thinking there is "the *coming-to-be* [*Werden*] of the object". This "object" – namely, being – is thus "not a static [*ruhend*] subject inertly supporting the accidents", but "on the contrary the self-moving concept" (or self-moving being). At the start of speculative logic, ordinary or metaphysical thought may think that being is the settled, "static" or "inert" subject-matter, but in the movement to which being gives rise, and in which it changes, "this static subject itself perishes": "the solid ground which argumentation [*Räsonnieren*] has" – or thinks it has – "in the static subject is therefore shaken, and only this movement itself becomes the object" (PS 36-7 / 44-5).

Of course, non-speculative thought may also think about the way things change; but then such change is itself the settled, or at least the *given*, subject-matter of thought: it is *there* to be thought *about*. In speculative logic, by contrast, the dynamic subject-matter is not simply *there*: it is not given at the start. We begin with an utterly indeterminate thought that then vanishes and

turns into a series of further thoughts (each of which is different from the others), and in this way such logic *comes* to have a rich, dynamic subject-matter that is more than pure being. This subject-matter is thus one that “emerges” (*emergiert*) in the course of logic; it is not one that is given in advance as that *about which* we are to think (PS 33 / 40).

One can, of course, state in advance in prefaces and introductions *that* we will be thinking an emerging content in logic, and Hegel does precisely that. This, however, does not give us that emerging content itself. (This applies equally to my own remarks in this chapter.) Indeed, it is impossible for that content to be given in advance of speculative logic, since it emerges only *from* pure being. One has thus to start with pure being – and with pure being alone – if one is to understand, or rather come to understand, the emerging “movement of being”.

There is a temptation when studying Hegel’s logic to want to have an overview of the subject-matter before engaging with that logic itself: the logic is notoriously difficult and it is unsurprising that one might wish for prior guidance. One should recognize, however, that such an overview can only do so much: for it cannot but miss – indeed, it may even distort – the very subject-matter it is meant to bring to mind. For this reason, Hegel urges us to “forget” any such overview when we begin “scientific cognition”, and simply to “surrender” ourselves to the “life of the object” – a surrender that requires us initially to think nothing but pure being (PS 32 / 40). If one wishes to prepare oneself for the study of Hegel’s logic, what is required above all is thus not (or not just) an overview of what is to come, but a readiness on the part of thought to “give up” (*aufgeben*) what Hegel calls the “*fixity* of its self-positing” (PS 20 / 27). This means giving up one’s own fixed position as the active subject who thinks and makes judgements about things, and letting one’s thought be guided by the movement of being itself. It also means giving up the idea that in logic there is a given, settled or “fixed” subject-matter to think about, and letting that subject-matter *emerge* from an indeterminate starting point.

We shall see exactly how this process of emergence unfolds when we consider in detail the actual course of speculative logic later in this study. One should note here, however, that such emergence is not something mysterious or irrational, but is produced in a precise way by the category of pure being and subsequent categories. Being proves to be *nothing* through its utter indeterminacy, and nothing proves to be *being* through its simple immediacy. Each subsequent category (starting with becoming) then has a more complex logical structure that implicitly contains another category (or other categories) and so makes the latter necessary. Each category thus gives rise through its own logic to a new category (or new categories), and in this sense they develop logically *into* one another. Since each is a further determination of being, the latter in turn proves to be the process of its own self-development or “self-movement”: the “movement of being itself” (SL 56 / LS 69). We follow this logical development

and we articulate it in thought, but the development is not driven by *our* activity. It is not the result of assumptions that we make, nor is it produced by our reflection on the categories. Categories develop into one another, not because of judgements that we make about them on the basis of our reasoning, but because of what *they* are logically, that is, through their own immanent logic.

The speculative sentence

Not only is *our* judgement not responsible for the transformation of one category into another, and so for the emergence of logic's subject-matter, but Hegel thinks that such emergence cannot be expressed or articulated in mere *judgements* at all (see SL 67, 744, / LS 82, LB 295). So how is it to be expressed? In the preface to the *Phenomenology* Hegel maintains that it must be expressed (principally) in what he calls "speculative sentences" (*spekulative Sätze*). Such sentences have a grammatical subject and predicate, like a judgement; but the logical relation between the two is different from that in a judgement, for the grammatical predicate is "no longer a *predicate* of the subject, but is the substance, the essence and the concept of what is under discussion" (PS 37 / 45, emphasis added).¹⁸ Consider, for example, the following two sentences: "the actual is universal" and "the actual is *the* universal".

The first is a simple judgement in which a subject, "the actual", is named and then said to have the property of being "universal". Since that property is predicated *of* the subject, that subject is thought in the judgement to precede the property. The subject does not, therefore, emerge in the course of the judgement itself, but, thanks to the form of the latter, is thought in it as that which comes first and that which the judgement is about. This is true of every judgement, in Hegel's view, and explains why mere judgements cannot express the *emergence* of their subjects. This is not to deny that there is a tension in the first sentence above: the subject, the "actual", precedes the predicate, "universal", and yet is rendered more determinate by that predicate and in that sense does not simply precede it.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the logical form of the judgement explicitly sets the subject apart from and ahead of the predicate – as a "ready-made, given subject" – and in that respect does not present that subject as something that emerges in the course of the judgement.

The logical structure of the second – speculative – sentence is subtly different. In this case, Hegel maintains, "the universal is not meant to have merely the significance of a predicate, as if the proposition asserted only that the actual is universal; on the contrary, the universal is meant to express the essence of the actual" (PS 39 / 47). Since the actual in the speculative sentence has a structure of its own (which is disclosed in the logic of essence), it can be said to come first in that sentence, too; yet in another and more important sense it does not come first but emerges *with* the thought of "the universal". The reason for this is that what Hegel understands by "essence" in his remarks on the sentence is not just

a property of a thing from which the thing can be distinguished, but the true nature of the thing itself. The speculative sentence does not, therefore, just attach a predicate to a distinct subject that is already given, but it *gives us* the subject, as it truly is, *through* the grammatical predicate. It reveals that the actual itself is in truth *the universal*, and in this way it presents the *emergence* of its subject-matter: the actual's coming to be what it truly is.

Now the sentence “the actual is the universal”, discussed in the *Phenomenology*'s preface, appears in neither the *Logic*, nor the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, and is in fact an unlikely candidate for inclusion in either text, since it skips over the thought that the actual must prove to be *substance* before it proves to be the universal. There are, however, other sentences in Hegel's two texts on logic that are clearly speculative ones. Consider the following examples from the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

being is the passing [Übergehen] into nothing and [. . .] nothing is the passing into being.

—EL 144 / 191 [§ 88 R]

As reflected *into itself* in this its determinacy, determinate being [Dasein] is *that which is determinate, something* [Daseiendes, Etwas].

—EL 146 / 195 [§ 90]

Quantity, *posited* essentially with the excluding determinacy that it contains, is *quantum*, or limited quantity.

—EL 161 / 214 [§ 101]

Each sentence is an identity statement that tells us through the grammatical predicate what the subject *is* in truth, rather than a judgement that merely attaches a logical predicate to a given subject. Yet there is also a difference between what the subject is first said to be and what it proves to be in the course of the sentence. So being is said to be, not just being, but the passing into nothing; determinate being is said to be, not just determinate, but something; and quantity is said to be, not just pure quantity, but a quantum. There is thus a *movement* in each sentence – “the dialectical movement of the sentence itself” (PS 40 / 48) – in which the true nature of the subject emerges, and the sentences, accordingly, are speculative ones.

Note, however, that these speculative sentences do not suffer from the problem that besets metaphysical judgements. In such judgements the subject is (or appears to be) given “ready-made” through representation, prior to a predicate being attached to it; and yet it is only through the predicate that we know precisely what the subject is, that we have a “firm” conception of the subject. A judgement, such as “God is eternal”, thus pulls us in two different

directions: for it asks us to look back to God to see whether the predicate “eternal” belongs to him, but equally to look forward to that predicate to understand clearly what “God” is in the first place. Speculative sentences, by contrast, point in *one* direction, namely that of the grammatical predicate: for the subject in each case, though different from the predicate, is not thought to be a “ready-made, given subject”, but is presented as coming into its true nature, and so as *emerging*, in and through that predicate. This might appear to be at odds with a remark Hegel makes in the *Phenomenology*’s preface: for he says there that in a speculative sentence we are “thrown back” (*zurückgeworfen*) by the predicate *to the subject* (PS 39 / 47). Hegel’s point, however, is not that in a speculative sentence, as in judgement, we have to look back to the subject to confirm that the predicate applies to it; it is rather that the predicate causes us to *revise* our initial conception of the subject. The predicate of a speculative sentence does this, precisely because it reveals, or renders explicit, the true nature of the subject that is initially no more than implicit. Such a sentence reveals that being is not just “being” after all, but the passing into nothing, and that determinate being is not just “determinate being” as such, but takes the form of “something”. We are “thrown back” to the subject by the predicate, therefore, because the predicate is where the subject, which we thought we knew definitively, emerges in its true light.

Hegel’s conception of the speculative sentence is given considerable prominence in the *Phenomenology*’s preface; but I do not think that he means such sentences to be the sole mode of expression of speculative thought, and indeed by no means every sentence in his two texts on logic is speculative in the way he describes. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, “science is not presented in the detailed development of its particularisation” (EL 39 / 60 [§ 16]), but even the main paragraphs, which (in contrast to the Remarks and Additions) carry the logic forward, contain more than just speculative sentences. More importantly, in the *Logic*, in which the dialectical transformation of categories is set out in its full complexity, the sentences employed by Hegel to do so are of several different kinds.

Many are recognizably speculative, such as the claims that “something and other are, *first*, both determinate beings [*Daseiende*] or *somethings*” and that “*second*, each is equally an *other*” (SL 90 / LS 112) (or at least the claims contained in these sentences, namely that the other is a something and that something is an other, are speculative ones). Other sentences look much like ordinary judgements, since they attach predicates to subjects, as in the claims that “*Dasein* is determinate” and that “something has a quality and in it is not only determined but limited” (SL 101 / LS 125). (The predicates, however, are drawn from the purely immanent study of the subjects themselves; so the sentences are not judgements in the metaphysical sense, or of course ordinary empirical judgements.) Yet other sentences are neither simple speculative ones

nor simple judgements, but complex sentences that articulate the development of a category through various stages, such as this one:

What *de facto* is at hand is this: determinate being [*Dasein*] as such, distinction in it, and the sublation of this distinction; determinate being, not void of distinctions as at the beginning, but as *again* self-equal *through the sublation of the distinction*; the simplicity of determinate being *mediated* through this sublation.

—SL 88-9 / LS 110²⁰

Note, too, that Hegel is not averse to using striking metaphors at times, as when he says of finite things that “the hour of their birth is the hour of their death” (SL 101 / LS 126). Hegel’s varied linguistic practice in the *Logic* suggests, therefore, that, in his view, speculative sentences are not the only ones that are suitable for speculative logic.²¹

Hegel’s explicit reflections on the speculative sentence show him to be acutely aware of the importance of developing an appropriate language for speculative thought. He declares that philosophy does not need a “special terminology” or vocabulary, but has “the right [*Recht*] to choose such expressions from the language of ordinary life [. . .] as *seem to approximate* the determinations of the concept” (that is, the categories) (SL 12, 628 / LS 11, LB 154);²² yet he clearly thinks that philosophy needs to craft appropriate *sentences* to express its distinctive truths. In my view, however, Hegel does not believe that these sentences all need to be speculative in the precise sense outlined in the *Phenomenology*’s preface. What is more important is that the sentences taken together avoid turning categories into the given, settled subjects of judgement, and instead articulate the immanent transformation of each category into another, that is, each category’s becoming other than itself (and thereby coming into its own truth). Such sentences, in other words, must form speculative paragraphs and pages, and express speculative arguments, even if they are not all speculative (or fully so) themselves.

Note that such paragraphs and arguments cannot just be concatenations of judgements, not only because the latter present their subjects as something given and “fixed”, but also because they are, in Hegel’s view, essentially one-sided. Hegel makes this point explicitly in the *Logic*.

At the start of logic pure being and pure nothing immediately vanish into, and thereby become, one another. In so doing, each proves to be the same as the other, since it *becomes* that other; yet the two remain different, since each vanishes into, and becomes, the *other*, its *opposite*. Each proves, therefore, to be the same as and different from the other at the same time. It is both the same and different, however, only in the process of becoming its other, that is, only in its dialectical movement.

In the second remark following his account of being and nothing, Hegel then considers the claim that “*being and nothing are one and the same*” as a simple judgement. As such, this claim is abstracted from the process of becoming just described and is a simple assertion in its own right. It is, however, one-sided, since being and nothing are also different; indeed, this difference is implicitly contained in the very statement of their sameness, since the latter states that *being* and *nothing* are the same. The simple judgement that they are the same thus needs to be supplemented by the further judgement that “*being and nothing are not the same*”. Yet this still leaves us falling short of the truth of the matter: for it merely sets up what Hegel calls an “antinomy” – “being and nothing are the same, yet they are not the same” – but this does not enable us to think of the categories as the same and different *at the same time*. As indicated above, we can do this only when being and nothing are thought as vanishing into, and so *becoming*, one another: as Hegel puts it, their “union” can be thought only “as an *unrest* of simultaneous *incompatibles*, as a *movement*”. This movement, however, is lost when all we have is a sequence of *judgements* that state first one thing and then the opposite (SL 66-7 / LS 81-2).

Speculative logic may not need to be articulated purely in speculative sentences, but it is clear that it cannot be presented in a series of judgements. Not only does every judgement present its subject as something given and settled, but each is also one-sided and a series of one-sided utterances cannot express and bring before our mind the movement and emergence of a subject-matter. Hegel’s aim, however, is precisely to bring such *movement* to mind. His sentences, therefore, cannot all be simple judgements, but – whether speculative or more straightforward – they must give adequate linguistic expression to the “immanent development” of being.

One further consequence of the limitations of judgement, by the way, is that speculative thought cannot be syllogistic in the traditional sense. This is because syllogistic inference (according to Kant, at least) is simply the derivation of a *judgement* from prior judgements, namely, the major and the minor premise (see CPR B 386). Such inference proceeds, for example, by first asserting or judging that “all men are mortal”, then asserting that “Socrates is a man”, and then concluding from this that “Socrates is mortal”. Since each component judgement has a settled subject and is itself a one-sided (that is, affirmative or negative) statement, syllogistic inference will not be able to set before us the dynamic, dialectical transformation of one category into another.²³ This is not to deny that speculative logic is inferential and concerned with necessary logical consequence: such logic still shows that *this* follows with necessity from *that*. Yet the necessity with which this logic is concerned is not one that leads from judgements to further judgements; it is the necessity, inherent in each category, that causes it to mutate before our very eyes into a new one.

THOUGHT'S ACTIVITY

Speculative thought may not presuppose any specific rules or method of procedure and so must simply follow the necessary development of thought's indeterminate being. In this respect, speculative thought must be quite passive. Yet it is not to be passive in the face of an external authority, but must surrender itself to the necessity inherent in thought itself. Since that necessity has no source but thought's own indeterminate being, it coincides with thought's self-determination and freedom. Our speculative thinking, therefore, must follow passively the course of thought's own free, but also necessary, development.

Anyone familiar with Hegel's philosophy of spirit, however, will know that he considers human thinking, as a form of "intelligence", to be essentially *active*.²⁴ It is clear, too, from his preliminary remarks about logic that speculative method requires us to be active, as well as passive. Yet such activity does not entail the application of pre-conceived rules after all (or the exercise of our creativity), but it is the activity that is inseparable from our *passivity*. That is to say, it is the activity that is necessary if we are to think without presuppositions.

Such activity consists first in holding at bay, through negative expressions or "negating reflections" (SL 20 / LS 20), all previous conceptions of thought and being, so that we can focus solely on pure being itself. Such expressions include, for example, the phrase that follows the words "*being, pure being*" at the start of the *Logic*: namely, "without any further determination" (SL 59 / LS 71). When we hear the word "being", it is easy for all manner of thoughts to crowd in on us and give further meaning to such "being": we may be tempted to think of it as substance, actuality, nature and so on. Through Hegel's phrase, however, we actively hold such meanings and "further determinations" at bay, so that we have in mind pure being alone. Note that the phrase does not aim to *define* being as "being-that-has-no-determination", since that would build the absence of determinacy explicitly into being and so turn it into the determinate negation of determinacy; being would thus be *non-* or *in-*determinacy, rather than pure *being*. The phrase serves, rather, to keep being free of all determinacy whatever: it directs us – and with it we direct ourselves – not to add any further determination to our initial thought of being, but to think being *and then stop*. With its help, therefore, we bring to mind pure *being*, and nothing else.²⁵

This activity of keeping being pure is inseparable from our passivity for an obvious reason: for if we were not able to focus on pure being in the first place, we could not let our thought be determined by the immanent development of such being. We also need to be active, however, in articulating and expressing that development. As we shall see in chapters to come, the logical structure of each category makes another (or others) necessary. The subsequent category is, however, implicit in the preceding one, rather than explicit. Our activity consists in rendering that subsequent category explicit,

and in this respect one category actually mutates into another in speculative logic in *our* thinking of it.

This is not to deny that the dialectic leading logically from one category to another is autonomous: our thinking is guided by a dialectic with a life of its own. Yet our thinking is the *exposition* of that dialectic: we articulate in language how one category gives rise to another, and we do so by rendering explicit what is implicit in a category. It is through our activity, therefore, that the dialectic inherent in the categories is actually unfolded in the science of logic. Our role, however, is not to push the dialectic forward with special insights of our own, or with anticipations of what is to come, but it is purely to bring out what is latent in each category itself. Our activity of rendering explicit is thus wholly determined by the dialectical development that each category itself makes necessary, and so is the activity through which we *passively* follow that development.

Hegel highlights this activity on the part of the speculative logician in the remark to § 88 in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: “quite generally”, he writes, “the whole course of philosophising, being methodical, i.e. *necessary*, is nothing else but the mere *positing* [*Setzen*] of what is already contained in a concept” (EL 141 / 188). It is important to bear in mind, however – despite Hegel’s use of the word “already” (*schon*) – that what is “posited”, or rendered explicit, by our activity is only *implicit* in a concept and so in that sense is not “already” contained in it. This point is somewhat obscured by Hegel’s claim in the same remark that the deduction of the unity of being and nothing in “becoming”, and thereafter the “whole course of philosophising”, is *analytic*. If the deduction of becoming were analytic in Kant’s sense, then being and nothing as such would already be becoming, in the way that a bachelor is from the outset an unmarried man. Yet the relation between being and nothing, on the one hand, and becoming, on the other, is not like that between being a bachelor and being unmarried: for at the start being is not becoming at all but pure being, and, when nothing emerges, it too is sheer nothing, rather than becoming. “Becoming” is thus not contained in being and nothing in a straightforwardly analytic manner. Each, however, is implicitly becoming and proves to be this explicitly by vanishing into the other and thereby proving to *be* nothing but that vanishing or “becoming”. As we articulate and render explicit this movement of vanishing, being and nothing both mutate logically, before our very eyes, into becoming; the latter, however, is contained in them “analytically” only in a qualified sense (and the same is true of every category insofar as it is implicit in its predecessor).

So, to repeat: if by the “method” of speculative logic we mean one that we actively employ, rather than just follow, then that method consists in *rendering explicit* what is implicit in categories (as well as holding at bay any external thoughts about the latter). In employing this method, however, we are determined by the logical structure of the categories themselves and what is

implicit in them. Our activity of rendering explicit is thus one through which we are *passive* and follow the dialectical method made necessary by the categories.

Now the categories of being and nothing are quite indeterminate and so make nothing necessary but their own vanishing. Later categories, however, have a more determinate and concrete content, and after the opening triad the science of speculative logic proceeds by rendering explicit what is implicit in such content. Unlike the method of metaphysics, this speculative procedure does not involve attributing given predicates to a given subject that serves as the “*criterion* of whether the predicates fit” (EL 68 / 97 [§ 30]), but it consists in drawing out and making visible what is initially unseen, or rather unthought, in a category. To be able to do this, of course, we must be able to keep the logical structure of each category clearly in view and determine what is implicit in it, that is, what follows of necessity from that structure. This in turn requires us to distinguish between what *we* might say about a category – for example, that it resembles another category – and what belongs to the category itself. If the development traced by speculative logic is to be purely immanent, and so both free and necessary, it must be generated solely by the structure – that is, the explicit structure – of each category, not by particular judgements that we might happen to make about them: as Hegel puts it, “only that which is *posited* [*gesetzt*] in a concept belongs in the developing consideration of the latter, to its content” (SL 84 / LS 104).²⁶ Our task, therefore, is to render explicit what is implicit only in what a category is explicitly.

Speculative logic thus demands further activity from us, as the condition of “rendering explicit”, namely that we focus on the specific category at hand (rather than on examples from everyday life that are all too often misleading) and conceive each category and its explicit logical structure with the utmost precision. This might seem to be an obvious, even a banal, point to make – since Hegel conceives of philosophy as a rational enterprise – but it is important for two reasons. First, as the categories get more complex, it is by no means easy to comprehend their logical structure and to distinguish them from one another; indeed, even established commentators on Hegel sometimes find it hard to keep categories apart.²⁷ It is worth emphasizing, therefore, that it takes effort to get the structure of a category clearly in view – effort that is part of what Hegel calls the “effort of the concept” (*Anstrengung des Begriffs*) required in speculative philosophy (PS 35 / 43). Second, not everyone, by any means, associates the idea of *precision* with Hegel. Schelling, for example, chastises Hegel for his “inexact way [*ohngefährte Art*] of expressing himself” in his *Logic*, and Popper, famously, charges him with setting out (in his philosophy of nature) “to deceive and bewitch others” with his “gibberish”.²⁸ In an addition to his *Encyclopaedia Logic*, however, Hegel states (or is reported to state) that “philosophising requires, above all, that each thought should be grasped in its full precision

[*Präzision*] and that nothing should remain vague and indeterminate” (EL 127-8 / 171 [§ 80 A]). Readers will have to judge for themselves whether Hegel achieves the precision he seeks; but it is important to note, *pace* Schelling and Popper, that he regards precision as an indispensable philosophical virtue, rather than a vice.

THE ROLE OF UNDERSTANDING

In Hegel’s view, precision is secured (in part) by the activity of the *understanding* (*Verstand*), which is, therefore, essential to speculative philosophy (EL 127 / 171 [§ 80 A]). This might strike some as surprising: for, as John Burbidge has noted (albeit some time ago), “understanding has had a bad press amongst Hegelians”.²⁹ Hegel readily acknowledges that the understanding is integral to life outside philosophy. “In the case of finite things”, he states, “it is certainly true that they must be determined by means of finite predicates, and here the understanding with its activity has its proper place”; so if I correctly call an action “theft” – thereby using a simple, one-sided, “finite” concept – I capture the “essential content” of the action, and this suffices, for example, for a judge in a court case (EL 68 / 96 [§ 28 A]). Yet Hegel also points to the limitations of understanding and insists that its finite categories are not able to comprehend the subject-matter of speculative philosophy, which is reason and its unity of opposites. Indeed, he claims, the understanding by itself can only regard “everything rational” as “mystical” (*mystisch*), which simply “amounts to saying that it transcends the understanding” (EL 133 / 179 [§ 82 A]). Similarly, when he distinguishes later in the *Logic* between the “true” and the “bad” infinite, he calls the former “the infinite of reason” and the latter “the infinite of the understanding”, again indicating that the understanding on its own – the understanding in its finitude – is incapable of grasping the truth that rational, speculative philosophy discloses (SL 109 / LS 135).

Having said all this, Hegel also recognizes that understanding is an ineliminable moment of philosophy, including logic. As he puts it in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*,

the *logical* has three sides: (α) *the side of abstraction* or of the *understanding*, (β) *the dialectical* or *negatively-rational* side, [and] (γ) *the speculative* or *positively-rational* one. These three sides do not constitute three *parts* of logic, but are *moments of everything logically real*, i.e., of every concept or of everything true as such.

—EL 125 / 168 [§ 79 and R]³⁰

Let us look more closely then at the role of the understanding within speculative logic.

In § 80 of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel maintains that “thinking as *understanding* stops short at the fixed determinacy and its distinctness from other determinacies”, and that “such a restricted abstraction counts for the understanding as one that subsists on its own account, and [simply] is”. In § 81 he then states that “the *dialectical* moment is the self-sublation of these finite determinations on their own part, and their passing into their opposites”; and in § 82 we are told that “the *speculative* or *positively rational* apprehends the unity of the determinations in their opposition” (EL 125-31 / 169-76). Reading these paragraphs might lead one to suppose, therefore, that in each of its many stages logic starts with a distinction, drawn by the understanding, between two limited categories, and then shows how this distinction dialectically undermines itself and the categories come to form a speculative unity of opposites. This, however, in fact gives us only a rough guide to the way the logic unfolds.

At the very start of logic, for example, we do not even have one “fixed determinacy”, let alone two, but we simply have indeterminate being. Moreover, the difference which then arises between being and nothing is not a determinate one, since it arises as each *vanishes* into the other; thought thus cannot be said at that point to “stop short at the fixed determinacy and its difference from other determinacies”. It is hard to argue, therefore, that the understanding, precisely as it is conceived in § 80, is at work at the start of logic. When we reach determinate being (*Dasein*), we arrive at a new starting point from which a new dialectic springs; the latter is subtly different from the dialectic of being and nothing, since the two forms of *Dasein* that emerge – namely, reality and negation – do not vanish into one another, but are rather concealed within one another (see SL 85 / LS 105). Yet the starting point – *Dasein* – still does not bear witness to the operation of understanding as described in § 80, since it stands alone and is not one “fixed determinacy” in relation to another.

There is a further fact that, in my view, makes it impossible to argue that each new category is first conceived by the understanding alone and then shown to turn dialectically into, and to form a speculative unity with, its opposite. This is the fact that every category after being and nothing is from the outset the *unity* of these two categories. As Hegel writes in the *Logic*:

since this unity of being and nothing as the primary truth now forms once and for all the basis and element of all that follows, so, besides becoming itself, all further logical determinations – *Dasein*, quality, and generally all philosophical concepts – are examples of this unity.

—SL 62 / LS 75

The unity of being and nothing in becoming is best described as a dialectical, rather than a speculative unity, since it consists in the vanishing of each into the other, not in their coexistence. In subsequent categories, however, being and

nothing form a speculative unity together. This means in turn that no category starts out being conceived by the understanding alone and proves only subsequently to be a speculative unity.

This is not to deny that outside speculative logic one *can* start from the mere distinctions of the understanding and then be led by those distinctions into dialectic. Indeed, Hegel describes just such a development in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, when he argues that conceiving the infinite in opposition to the finite (as the understanding does) turns the infinite into a finite infinite.³¹ It is clear from what has been said in the last paragraphs, however, that the development articulated in speculative logic cannot take this straightforward form (or at least cannot do so in the case of every category). §§ 80-2 of the *Encyclopaedia* do not, therefore, set out a simple sequence of operations that is repeated throughout logic.

Yet to say this is not to eliminate altogether the idea that categories *start* from their specific determinacy and *then* prove to be dialectical and thereby transform themselves into new categories. Categories do, indeed, generate a dialectic of their own, and, moreover, the understanding plays an important role in grasping each category before it becomes dialectical. The sequence of operations described in §§ 80-2 is thus not utterly misleading. As I noted above, however, it gives us no more than a rough guide to the way the logic unfolds.

What then is the role played by the understanding in speculative logic? It is simply to hold clearly in view, and to conceive precisely, whatever category is being considered. In the case of pure being, this means focussing on being in its sheer indeterminacy, but in all subsequent cases it means focussing on the category's complex logical structure, whatever that may be. In some of these cases (such as "being-in-itself") that structure involves the category's being differentiated from another category (such as "being-for-other") and in that sense being explicitly "one-sided"; in other cases (such as finitude) the category initially stands alone. In every case, however, the category is the speculative *unity* of being and nothing, and so is not a *purely* one-sided, "finite" category of the understanding. In speculative logic, therefore, no category is "determinate" in exactly the way the understanding alone would conceive it. Nonetheless, it has a unique character that constitutes its determinacy in a speculative sense, and it is this determinacy that the understanding holds clearly in view.

One can thus describe the role of the understanding in speculative logic as follows: it is, first, to abstract from itself and its own distinctions, and to think pure being, and then to give us a precise conception of the categories that emerge from such being – categories that are those of *reason*, rather than of mere understanding itself. After the beginning, therefore, understanding does not operate on its own in speculative logic, but is always a moment of reason. Hegel highlights this intimate unity of understanding and reason in a significant passage in the preface to the first edition of the *Logic*. He notes that "the

understanding is usually taken as something separate from reason as such”, just as “dialectical reason is usually taken as something distinct from positive reason”. But, he continues, “reason is in its truth *spirit* which, higher than both, is reason-with-understanding [*verständige Vernunft*] or rational understanding [*vernünftiger Verstand*]” (SL 10 / LS 6-7). Pure reason is thus not just pure reason at all, but reason *with understanding*; the role of such understanding in turn is not just to do its own familiar work but to conceive with the utmost precision the categories that reason shows to be necessary.

In Hegel’s view, however, we need to have a clear and precise conception not just of each category but also of the way in which it transforms itself *into* new categories. Precision is thus required not just from the understanding but also from the two “moments” of dialectical and speculative reason (which is why I said above that precision is secured only “in part” by the understanding). Yet why, one may ask, is precision so important to Hegel? Why not philosophize (as Robert Solomon says of Nietzsche) through “hints, winks, suggestions”?³² The reason, I think, can be found in two points Hegel makes in the preface to the *Phenomenology*.

The first is that the subject-matter of philosophy, or logic, would not be presented in its necessity, indeed would hardly be presented at all, if it were not fully expounded: as Hegel puts it, “the matter at hand [*Sache*] is exhausted, not by stating it as an *aim*, but by *carrying it out* [*sondern in ihrer Ausführung*]” (PS 2 / 5). The aim of speculative logic, as we know, is to avoid arbitrary assumptions and to disclose whatever categories are inherent in, and made necessary by, thought. Yet logic will not be able to show categories to be necessary, unless it sets out in full detail how they are generated by prior categories. This in turn requires precise attention to those categories and a precise exposition of the way in which they transform themselves into new ones. It is for this reason that, by Hegel’s own admission, the *Encyclopaedia*, in contrast to the *Science of Logic*, provides an inadequate account of logic: for “the nature of an outline not only rules out any exhaustive discussion of ideas in respect of their *content*, but also particularly cramps [*beengt*] the tracing out [*Ausführung*] of their systematic derivation [. . .], i.e., the very thing that is quite indispensable for a scientific philosophy” (EL 1 / 11 [Preface to 1st edn]).

Hegel’s second point in the *Phenomenology*’s preface is that philosophy should be generally intelligible, rather than “the esoteric possession of a few individuals”, and that “only what is completely determinate [*bestimmt*] is at once exoteric, comprehensible, and capable of being learned and appropriated by all” (PS 7 / 11). Determinacy and precision are required in philosophy, therefore, so that in principle everyone may understand what is going on (even if in practice the unavoidable difficulty of the subject will deter many from engaging with it). Such general intelligibility is itself important, in Hegel’s view, because ordinary consciousness or understanding demands it and is justified in so doing.

Philosophy, as Hegel conceives it, requires that ordinary – and also metaphysical – understanding give up its familiar assumptions and begin from the thought of indeterminate being. Philosophy then requires such understanding to follow a dialectical development that explicitly violates those familiar assumptions and that leads to a speculative “unity of opposites” that can only strike the understanding that remains outside speculative philosophy as mystical. Philosophy thus demands of understanding that it cease being pure understanding and become *reason*. Yet, in Hegel’s view, such understanding demands in turn, with justification, that philosophical reason be intelligible to it, so that it can become reason *through understanding*. Hegel’s philosophy meets this demand in two ways: it shows understanding that its *own* interest in freedom (and, in Kant’s case, in anti-dogmatism) requires it to suspend its assumptions and become presuppositionless thought, which then itself proves to be dialectical, speculative reason; and such reason in turn contains understanding as its own moment – the moment that conceives the categories with precision. This precision gives to speculative reason, or philosophy, what Hegel calls an “intelligible [*verständlich*] form”, and this form allows ordinary (and metaphysical) understanding to *understand* why it must lose itself to, and so become, reason, not only at the start but through the whole course of philosophy. “The intelligible form of science” is thus “the way open and equally accessible to everyone” and so satisfies “the just demand of consciousness, as it approaches science, that it be able to attain to rational knowledge through understanding” (PS 7-8 / 11).³³

It is important to stress that speculative logic must be precise, principally, so that it can be what it is meant to be: the *exposition* of what, if anything, is inherent in thought. At the same time, logic’s intelligibility enables ordinary understanding to reconcile itself to logic; and, in this way, such intelligibility promotes our “humanity”, whose nature it is “to press onward to agreement with others”. By contrast, the one who does not render himself intelligible, who does not articulate his thoughts in a clear and precise way, but who “makes his appeal to feeling, to an oracle within his breast” and who declares that “he is finished and done with anyone who does not agree”, “tramples underfoot the roots of humanity” (PS 43 / 51).

Yet those who have already cast their eyes over the main text of Hegel’s *Logic* may be forgiven a wry smile at the suggestion that Hegel aims for general *intelligibility*. Indeed, even devotees of Hegel’s text have to admit that it contains some of the most forbidding and (at first sight, at least) impenetrable sentences in the history of philosophy. The infamous “unintelligibility” of his text is due, however, to the intrinsic difficulty of the subject-matter, to the use of unusual sentence forms (such as the speculative sentence), and perhaps at times to Hegel’s own inability to word things clearly enough; it is *not* due to any deliberate vagueness, or desire “to deceive and bewitch others”, on his part.

On the contrary, Hegel demonstrates, throughout his text, a tireless willingness to take on the “labour of the concept” (PS 43 / 52) and to set out in painstaking detail precisely how categories develop into one another. If readers are prepared to attend to these details, with both understanding and an openness to thought’s inherent dialectic, they will find that the *Logic* is far less unintelligible than it is reputed to be.

Understanding has been the subject of discussion over the last few pages, because it is an activity of thought that is essential to speculative logic. One should be careful, however, not to turn it into the (or a) “motive power of philosophical thinking”, as Burbidge appears to do.³⁴ Burbidge deserves great credit for having insisted so consistently that speculative thought requires understanding; yet, in my view, he gives understanding a determining role in such thought that sits somewhat uneasily with the idea that the latter, in its very activity, is fundamentally passive.

Understanding, in speculative logic, is our activity of articulating with precision the distinctive logical structure or “determinacy” of each category; but it does not make each category determinate in the first place, since the determinacy belongs in each case to the category itself. That determinacy arises through the dialectic generated by the previous category, and it then gives rise to its own unique dialectic. What drives speculative logic forward, therefore, is “the content in itself” and “*the dialectic which it possesses within itself*” (SL 33 / LS 39), not the work of our understanding. In his major study of Hegel’s logic, however, Burbidge appears to make our understanding *itself* responsible – at least in part – for dialectical development and the progression of logic.

The understanding, on Burbidge’s reading, first “isolates” a given category: “understanding takes the initiative”, he writes, and “the concept *finite* is isolated to define it clearly”. Similarly, “understanding isolates the concept of *infinity*” and “understanding isolates the immediate concept, *essence*”.³⁵ It then turns out that a category “cannot be isolated without contradiction”: “*being* is in fact *nothing*; *nothing* is in fact *being*”, something and other both prove to be something and to be other than one another, and so on.³⁶ The isolating of categories by the *understanding* thus causes them to turn dialectically into their opposites, which in turn requires thought to give up the idea that categories are, or can be, isolated and to conceive of them anew. Yet, in Burbidge’s view, understanding’s activity is not the only one responsible for the emergence of new categories, as we can see from this sentence: “the isolation of understanding has been broken down dialectically by the very act of *forcing* the understanding to be thorough-going in its analysis”.³⁷ Who or what does the forcing? A further form of thought that Burbidge calls “dialectical questioning” or simply “dialectic”. Categories turn dialectically into one another, therefore, not only because understanding isolates them, but also because “dialectical questioning endeavours to make clear the character of the determination” that has been isolated.³⁸

It is not my intention here to detract from the considerable importance of Burbidge's book on the *Logic*; without it I would certainly not be working on the *Logic* myself. My intention in looking briefly at Burbidge's remarks on understanding is simply to help clarify (what I take to be) the subtle interplay between the activity and passivity of thought in Hegel's logic. Thought – our thought – must, indeed, be active in such logic; yet we do not actively “isolate” categories through our own “initiative” in the manner described by Burbidge, and no such “isolation” (or “forcing”) on our part drives the logic forward (nor, *pace* Pippin, is it moved forward by thought's “attempting to render *determinate* any possible object of self-conscious thought”).³⁹ Our activity is itself determined exclusively by the *category* to which we are attending. It consists simply in holding in view and articulating with precision the determinacy that belongs to that category – without further “isolating” it – and then rendering explicit what is implicit in the category. Accordingly, our thought is passive in its activity, and this activity serves ultimately to let the matter at hand itself hold sway and “move itself” (PS 36 / 44).

Having said this, it *is* true to say that our understanding actively “isolates” the initial category of pure being. It does so, as we indicated above, through negative expressions (such as “without any further determination”) that seek to keep being completely free of determinacy (1: 75). *Pace* Burbidge, however, this still does not mean that our understanding is the “motive power of philosophical thinking”: for what causes pure being to vanish into nothing, and so initiates dialectical development, is its own indeterminacy, not the “*effort of understanding* to render precise what is involved in the category *being*”.⁴⁰

Moreover, Burbidge appears to misunderstand what the activity or “effort” of the understanding at the start of logic involves. “Rendering precise”, as Burbidge describes it, involves defining something more clearly, and “definition” in turn “requires some specific contrast with something else”. The “effort” to render the category of being precise thus entails trying to distinguish it explicitly from other concepts, trying to say that it is this, not that. This effort, however, fails, and as a result pure being proves to be nothing. In Burbidge's own words,

Being is equivalent only to itself. This positive assertion, though, does not distinguish it from anything to which it is unequal, for all specific determinations have been excluded. When it considers this, its most primitive category, then, thought finds nothing there to think.⁴¹

To my mind, however, this does not quite capture what Hegel has in mind. The understanding's activity and effort at the start of the *Logic* do not aim, but fail, to distinguish being from other concepts, but seek specifically to keep being free of all distinction. The understanding certainly seeks a “precise” conception of being; but that means that it seeks to keep being's utter indeterminacy precisely

in view, not that it aims (fruitlessly) to render being determinate and distinct. It is that indeterminacy that then turns being into nothing.

It is possible that I have misread Burbidge in the previous paragraph, and that he takes the “effort” to render being precise – as I do – to be the effort to keep being indeterminate, rather than to render it determinate. Even in that case, however, it is still not our effort as such, but being’s own indeterminacy, that leads it to vanish into nothing.

RESTRAINT

Although speculative logic is driven forward by the dialectic inherent in each category, the presentation of such logic clearly demands activity and effort from us. In the preface to the *Phenomenology*, for example, we read that in “science” we must take upon ourselves “the effort [*Anstrengung*] of the concept” and that this “requires attention to the concept as such, to the simple determinations, e.g. of being-in-itself, being-for-self, self-equality, and so on” (PS 35 / 43). In this case, therefore, effort is expended in conceiving each category with precision, and it is expended by our understanding (insofar as it is a moment of reason, rather than a way of thinking in its own right). The effort of keeping pure being free of all determinacy also belongs to this “effort of the concept”; and so, too, does the work of keeping all subsequent categories free of external, contingent assumptions, or, as Hegel puts it, “the effort to beware of our own inventions and particular opinions which are forever wanting to push themselves forward” (EL 305 / 390 [§ 238 A]). This latter effort, indeed, is the necessary complement to the activity of conceiving categories with precision: for one cannot do the latter properly without keeping categories free from extraneous assumptions.⁴²

To refuse in this way to intrude into “the immanent rhythm of the concept” with arbitrary insights or “with wisdom obtained from elsewhere” is to exercise what Hegel calls “restraint” (*Enthaltbarkeit*) (PS 36 / 44). Such restraint is essential to speculative philosophy, but it can be difficult and, indeed, a matter of some frustration to achieve, for it involves suppressing all ideas gained from outside speculative logic, whether they are based on experience, intuition or the thoughts of other philosophers. One cannot, therefore, draw on the thoughts of Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant or anyone else to justify or to criticize the immanent derivation of the categories traced in speculative logic.⁴³ Yet this does not mean abandoning one’s critical perspective altogether: one still needs to consider whether *Hegel’s* derivation of the categories is as immanent as he claims it is. One does this, however, by examining each category closely, spelling out what it makes necessary and determining whether Hegel holds himself strictly to this, not by invoking what Aristotle or Kant may have said about the matter. Hegel’s *Logic* certainly includes remarks comparing the thoughts of

both these philosophers with the results of speculative philosophy, as well as other digressions and anticipations of what is to come.⁴⁴ In Hegel's view, however, the actual derivation of the categories must be carried out with the utmost *restraint*, which means showing only how categories give rise to further categories and holding at bay or otherwise countering "what representation or an undisciplined thinking might otherwise introduce" (SL 20 / LS 20). Our task as readers of the *Logic* is thus to exercise such restraint ourselves and to check that Hegel meets his own demand and does the same.

Hegelian restraint precludes two other ways of thinking and philosophizing with which most people will be familiar. The first is thinking on the basis of possibility, that is, thinking of what *can* or *could* be the case. Hegel considers what he calls "the style of that '*one can*'" (*Stil jenes Könnens*) in the third remark in the *Logic* on being and nothing. He notes there – for the benefit of those who are dissatisfied with, and would prefer to "forget", the "conversion" or vanishing of being and nothing into one another – that there is, conceivably, another way to make progress in logic: one can simply continue the process of abstraction that first leads to the thought of pure being. This latter thought arises when we set to one side, and so abstract from, everything we otherwise take thought and being to be. "One *can* abstract also from this pure being", Hegel continues; "being *can* be thrown in with the everything from which abstraction has already been made, and then *nothing* remains". Equally, we *can* abstract from this nothing, so that what remains is not nothing but being again. Yet Hegel clearly has little regard for this way of proceeding: for "this '*one can*' [*Können*]" generates an external play of abstraction" and so has no place in a logic whose task is to trace the *immanent* development of thought (SL 75-6 / LS 93).

If we ignore phenomenology (which we will look at briefly in the next chapter), the ability to abstract is indeed the condition of speculative logic, for without that ability we could not first set our assumptions to one side and think pure being.⁴⁵ Yet precisely because speculative logic must then proceed without arbitrary assumptions, it may do no more than trace what follows immanently from the thought of pure being. Within logic itself, therefore, no *external* thoughts or considerations may play a role in moving us on from pure being to further categories; and this includes the external activity of asserting what one *can* do or what *could* be the case. In the doctrine of essence Hegel shows that the category of possibility is itself a necessary one; it turns out, therefore, to be an inherent feature of thought that we think about what we can do and what can happen (and, indeed, as Hegel argues at the start of his philosophy of right, thinking of possibilities is an integral part of practical human freedom in the world).⁴⁶ In the course of speculative logic, however, we are to think only of what follows immanently, and so with necessity, from pure being; entertaining possibilities thus has no role to play in such logic (though we do have to consider the necessary logical structure of possibility itself).

“Time was”, Hegel notes in the preface to the *Phenomenology*, “when the bare possibility of imagining something differently was sufficient to refute an idea, and this bare possibility, this general thought, also had the entire positive value of an actual cognition” (PS 9 / 13), and examples of such “imagining” from our own day are not hard to find. In speculative logic, however, bare possibilities count for nothing. This imposes a severe restraint on readers of Hegel’s *Logic* that can be frustrating, for it prevents us from thinking about thought and categories in the way we are used to. If Hegel’s account of a category proves to be deficient in some way, we may certainly – indeed, we must – point this out and revise his account (and Hegel did this himself when preparing the second edition of the *Logic*).⁴⁷ Such revision, however, must entail explaining, through a precise understanding of a category, how that category should in fact be conceived; what we cannot do is simply assert that a category *could* be conceived differently, or that other categories altogether *could* be considered. In speculative logic the whole way of thinking that involves saying “but surely, couldn’t . . . ?” has to be given up.

The second way of thinking that is precluded by speculative logic is that which is based on *reasons* (rather than reason as such). This is not to deny that, for Hegel, reasons matter outside of philosophy. Hegel notes in the *Phenomenology* that education begins “by getting acquainted with general principles and points of view” and learning to “support and refute them with reasons [*Gründe*]” (PS 3 / 5-6). Accordingly, as he argues elsewhere, it is inadmissible to rely in one’s thinking on mere feeling: for “whoever does this withdraws from the common field of reasons [*Feld der Gründe*], of thought and of the matter itself into his individual subjectivity” (EPM 71 / 100 [§ 400 A]). As far as ordinary life and the non-philosophical sciences are concerned, therefore, Hegel would agree with Robert Brandom that a rational being is “subject to a distinctive kind of normative appraisal”, namely “assessment of the *reasons* for what one does”, and so is a creature that inhabits “the space of reasons”.⁴⁸

Yet Hegel also argues that to think on the basis of reasons is not the way in which speculative philosophy is to proceed. The problem is that any reasons we give for our thoughts and judgements are themselves “in need of further reasons, and so on *ad infinitum*” (PS 40 / 48); thinking on the basis of reasons thus “admits of no certain and ultimate ground” (EL 40 / 61 [§ 16 R]). Whatever reasons we adduce in our thinking, therefore, rest ultimately on ungrounded assumptions and assertions, and so are ultimately no more than assumptions themselves: they are what we happen to think, or want to think, or have agreed to think, and have no further warrant. Invoking reasons is certainly to move beyond immediate assertion to mediated, and in that sense rational, cognition; yet it is also not to do so, but to rely on the immediate assertions hidden in our very reasons. Thinking on the basis of reasons is thus not actually as rational as it thinks it is, for it is not determined through and through *by reason*.

As we have seen, the only way to avoid basing arguments on ungrounded assumptions is to set *all* assumptions to one side and begin from the utterly indeterminate being of thought, and then to unpack what, if anything, is made necessary by such being: that is, to do speculative logic. Since such logic articulates what is necessary in thought, and does so with no prior assumptions, it is thoroughly rational; indeed, for Hegel, it is the only form of thought that is completely rational. In Hegel's view, therefore, if we want to think freely, self-critically and rationally, and not just to rely on hidden assertions, we must eschew thinking on the basis of reasons and simply follow the immanent development of thought. As he puts it in the *Phenomenology*,

it is not difficult to see that the way of asserting a proposition, adducing reasons [*Gründe*] for it, and in the same way refuting its opposite by reasons, is not the form in which truth can appear. Truth is its own self-movement [*Die Wahrheit ist die Bewegung ihrer an ihr selbst*].

—PS 28 / 36

Studying the system of logic, Hegel claims, requires us to adhere strictly to what a category must be understood to be and to be guided solely by that; in this sense, dwelling and labouring in this “realm of shadows” is “the absolute education [*Bildung*] and discipline of consciousness” (SL 37 / LS 44). A crucial element in this education is learning actively to “hold off [*fernhalten*] the contingency of ratiocinative thought and the arbitrariness of letting these reasons or their opposites come to mind and have validity” (SL 37 / LS 44). This in turn means keeping at bay whatever external reasons we may have for understanding a category in this way or that. Speculative logic is thus not a space of *reasons* (*Gründe*), for Hegel, but is rather the space of pure *reason* (*Vernunft*) itself.

The method of speculative logic is clearly different from that of ordinary reasoning and that of most other philosophy (though the requirement that thought be determined by the matter at hand, rather than by *our* ideas and judgements, is by no means alien to the philosophies of Descartes and Spinoza, and dialectic is not alien to that of Plato). One should remember, however, that speculative logic is different because it aims to be more rational than other ways of thinking, not less so. Remember, too, that, *pace* some of his critics, Hegel does not presuppose his system and then try to justify it by calling it “presuppositionless” and “rational”. He begins from what he takes to be the most rational way of thinking – most rational because least question-begging and thus most necessary – and his system is simply whatever emerges through this way of thinking. Hegel's own presentation of that system is not at all beyond criticism; it must be criticized, however, on the basis of what reason requires us to think, not just our various “reasons”.

METHOD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE END

Before speculative logic begins Hegel makes remarks on method in the introductory material of both the *Logic* and *Encyclopaedia Logic*. Yet his most extensive remarks on method are to be found at end of the *Logic* in the discussion of the “absolute Idea”. These remarks, however, are specifically about the way method is to be understood from the perspective of *the end*, which is subtly different from the way it is conceived at the start and as we proceed. What follows here is an attempt to clarify that difference.⁴⁹

Speculative method, as it has been presented so far, requires us to be both active and passive. We have to be active at the start in keeping pure being free of all determinacy, and we then have to articulate the dialectic to which being and subsequent categories give rise by rendering explicit what is implicit in each category. Yet our activity serves only to enable us to follow passively the immanent logical development of the categories themselves: we must actively exercise “restraint” so that nothing but that immanence – no external “reason” or “bright idea”, and no anticipation of an eventual “goal” – takes us from one category to another. Speculative method thus consists ultimately in following the method that the “system itself follows” (SL 33 / LS 39).

The method described by Hegel in the final chapter of the *Logic* is the same method, since it, too, is determined by the system of categories itself. Hegel points out in that chapter that the method he considers there may be regarded as the “*manner* of cognition”, as the way in which *we* come to know the categories. Yet he also insists that this method is “a modality of cognition” determined ultimately, not by us, but “by the *concept*”; indeed, he writes, “method here is only the movement of the *concept* itself”. The “concept” (*Begriff*), as Hegel understands it here, is what is universal *in* particulars and individuals, and so is simply the inner rationality within categories and things. The method that Hegel considers in the last chapter of the *Logic* is thus in truth “the method proper to each subject matter” (*die eigene Methode jeder Sache*), or the method of *immanence* (SL 736-7 / LB 285-6).

There is, then, just one method of speculative logic, and this is described both before the start *and* at the end of logic. This is the one that is made necessary by the matter at hand. It requires us to think “analytically” by rendering explicit what is implicit in each category, but also “synthetically” by showing that what is implicit is in fact *other* than that category. It thus requires us to follow the dialectic through which each category “determines itself from within itself as the *other of itself*” (SL 741 / LB 291). This method, in other words, requires us to follow the immanent development – the immanent *method* – of thought (and being) itself.

At the end of logic, however, Hegel does not just repeat what he has said earlier about its method, but he also redescribes that method in terms that

become available only when we reach the end. What is set out or “thematized” in the last chapter of the *Logic* (and the last sections of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*) is thus not just immanent method *tout court*, but such method *reconceived* from the perspective of the end of logic. More specifically, Hegel presents the method of logic from the perspective of the absolute *Idea* (*Idee*); indeed, he reconceives that method retrospectively as the method *of* the Idea.⁵⁰

For reasons we cannot explore here (because they require close study of the doctrines of essence and the concept), the being with which we begin proves in the end to be the “absolute Idea” or self-determining reason (SL 735 / LB 283). This Idea is thus the final category to emerge, after infinity, essence, substance, concept and so on. It differs from all previous categories, however, in one important respect. Every previous category is clearly distinct from its predecessors: it has a unique logical structure or “content” with its own unique dialectic; the absolute Idea, by contrast, is simply the unity or totality that is formed by all those other categories. To say that being proves to be the absolute Idea, or that this Idea emerges, at the end of logic is thus simply to say that the categories derived prior to the Idea prove to be moments of *one* single, continuous process that we call the “Idea”. Of course, since each category leads immanently to its successor, logic has constituted a single process all along; when being proves to be the Idea, however, logic proves to be a single process *explicitly*, to be an explicit unity and totality: the “self-movement of the absolute Idea” (SL 736 / LB 284). (The Idea is thus not just the universal *in* each category, like the concept, but the whole process formed *by* the categories, or their “systematic totality”).⁵¹

The absolute Idea, then, unlike other categories, has no unique logical content of its own; its content is just the system of all the other categories: “the entire system, the development of which we have been considering so far” (EL 304 / 389 [§ 237 A]). It does, however, have a distinctive *form*. This is the form exhibited by the system of categories insofar as the latter constitutes an explicit *totality*, insofar as it is the self-moving, self-determining *Idea*. Note that the system cannot exhibit this form before the end of logic because it is not yet an explicit totality, not yet the Idea; it exhibits this form only when it proves to be, and so becomes, the Idea. The form is thus the distinctive form *of* the Idea, *of* the explicit systematic totality.

In the *Logic* Hegel equates this form, or more precisely its “universal aspect” (*das Allgemeine*), with *method* – the method of the system as a whole (SL 736 / LB 285).⁵² This point is echoed in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: since the content of the Idea is just “the system *of the logical*”, Hegel writes, “all that remains here as *form* for the Idea is the *method* of this content” (EL 304 / 389 [§ 237]). Note that this form or method is the only thing that gives the Idea an identity of its own over against the other categories. Those categories themselves constitute the content of the Idea, so the Idea in its own right – the Idea “*for*

itself" (SL 736 / LB 285) – can be nothing but the *method* of that content: the *way* the other categories organize themselves into the systematic whole that is the Idea.

Yet there is a tension in the above quotation from the *Encyclopaedia*: for it suggests that the Idea has its *own* form or method, but states that this is just the method of *its content* (and so belongs to all the other categories). The tension, however, is easily resolved. Insofar as the method of the Idea belongs to the content – is simply the way the latter develops – it is none other than the immanent, dialectical method with which we are now familiar. Yet insofar as it is the form or method of *the Idea*, it belongs to that same content conceived explicitly *as* a systematic totality, that is, *as* the self-moving Idea. The method considered at the end of the *Logic* – the method of the Idea – is thus not something altogether new: it is simply the method of *immanent* development, reconceived *as* the unfolding of the Idea. We can see more clearly what this means, if we look at Hegel's remarks at the end on "beginning".

The first reconception of the beginning at the end of logic

As Hegel understands it, the method of the self-moving Idea, or of the system as a totality – the method that becomes visible only at the end – has three principal stages: the beginning, the advance and the result or point of completion.⁵³ The beginning, we are told, since it is just the beginning, must be an "*immediate*" (*Unmittelbares*) and so must be *being* (SL 738 / LB 287-8). In this respect, the beginning of the self-moving Idea is just the beginning of logic as such. Yet the former cannot be reduced to the latter, since it is not a simple beginning: it is the beginning *of* that which is, and is known from the start to be, a totality, the Idea. This means in turn that, for the method that becomes clear at the *end* of logic, the being with which we *begin* is not just pure being, but being that is from the outset "deficient" since it is *not yet* the totality, Idea or (as Hegel also puts it) "concept" that is to come. In Hegel's words, the beginning "has for the method no other determinacy than that of being the simple and universal", namely *being*; yet "this is itself the *determinacy* through which it is deficient [*mangelhaft*]", since "the method, as the consciousness of this concept, knows that universality is only a moment and that in it the concept is not yet determined in and for itself" (SL 739 / LB 289). At the start of logic viewed from the start, not from the end, being is thought in its purity without reference to anything else and exposes its "deficiency" by vanishing into nothing, *not* by falling short of what is to come. By contrast, when it is reconceived at the end as the beginning of the self-moving Idea, being is understood to be deficient precisely because it is not yet that Idea (or concept).

Yet this does not mean that the method of the Idea does not require the beginning to develop immanently. We have already seen that at the end of logic,

just as elsewhere, Hegel conceives of method as “the method proper to each subject matter”, and thus as immanent; and he stresses this again when discussing the beginning. Although, from the perspective of the end, being is judged deficient by reference to the Idea (or concept), Hegel notes that we cannot move on from being *solely in order to reach that Idea*. Were we to do that, he claims, we would move on simply “for the sake of the method”, that is, just so we can advance from the beginning to the result; but that in turn would be to treat the method as something “posited in external reflection”, not as immanent, not as each matter’s *own* method. The method, however, is precisely “the objective immanent form”; so “the immediate of the beginning must be *in its own self* deficient and endowed with the *impulse* to carry itself further” (SL 739 / LB 289). Being must develop, therefore, exactly as we see it do at the very beginning of logic, namely by vanishing of its own accord into nothing, and so on.

And yet the method of the Idea not only requires the beginning to develop immanently; it also requires that beginning to be understood as the beginning *of the totality that is the Idea*, and so as itself implicitly, but not yet explicitly, that totality. As Hegel puts it, “in the absolute method the universal” – being – “has the value not of a mere abstraction but of the objective universal, that is, the universal that is *in itself* or *implicitly* [*an sich*] the *concrete totality*, but a totality that is not yet *posited*, is not yet *for itself*” (SL 739 / LB 289). The method of logic, as it is conceived at the end – that is, as the method of the Idea – requires us, therefore, to adopt a *double perspective on the beginning*. We must understand it to be the *beginning*, and so to be sheer being and to develop purely immanently; but we must also understand it to be the beginning *of* a totality, *of* the Idea, and so to be being-that-is-implicitly-a-concrete-totality. Moreover, we must understand the beginning, conceived both as sheer being *and* as an implicit concrete totality, to initiate the development towards the Idea. From the perspective of the Idea, the development of logic must be purely immanent; but it must also be conceived as the development of the implicit totality that forms the beginning, as Hegel does in these lines from the *Logic*:

The concrete totality which makes the beginning possesses as such, within it [*in ihr selbst*], the beginning of the advance and development. As concrete, it is *differentiated* within itself, but because of its *initial immediacy*, this first differentiation is to start with a *diversity*. However, as self-relating universality, as subject, the immediate is also the *unity* of this diversity. – This reflection is the first stage of the forward movement – the emergence of *real difference* [*Differenz*], *judgment*, and *determining* in general.

—SL 740 / LB 290

According to these lines, the beginning produces an advance, not because it vanishes into nothing, but because it is “concrete” and so “differentiated within

itself". It is crucial to bear in mind, however, that what we read here is a retrospective *redescription* or *reconception*, from the perspective of the Idea, of the initial "forward movement". It is not an account of the logic that actually moves us forward, *at the start*, from being to further determinations; that logic begins with the immediate vanishing of being. This is not to say that the redescription is arbitrary: once being has proven to be the concept and then the Idea, we are quite justified in going back and understanding being at the start as *implicitly* concept and Idea; and we may also conceive of the "advance" from one category to another, as Hegel does in the *Encyclopaedia*, as the "*judgment* of the Idea". Indeed, we are required by the Idea to reconceive the logic in this way: once the Idea has emerged, we must conceive of the logic as the self-movement, or "self-determining", of that Idea (EL 305 / 390-1 [§§ 238-9]).

Yet, at the same time, the logic that leads from being to the Idea in the first place must be purely presuppositionless and immanent, and so is not captured by its reconception as the self-movement of the *Idea*. The method of logic, as it is reconceived at the end of logic, is thus not the method that first gets us to that end; it is, in Angelica Nuzzo's words, "the 'method' that becomes visible only once the end of the Logic has been achieved", and that can only arise "*from the preceding immanent development*" that it does not itself govern.⁵⁴ Moreover, the method of the Idea itself requires us to adopt this double perspective on the beginning and the ensuing development. From the perspective of the Idea, the development to the Idea must be the purely immanent development of pure being; but it must also be conceived retrospectively as the development of a beginning that is implicitly that Idea or totality. The initial, purely immanent mutation of being into determinate being, something, and so on must itself be reconceived as the first stage of the *Idea's* development, namely "the emergence of *real difference*" (SL 740 / LB 290).

It is tempting to think that the last chapter of the *Logic*, with its extensive discussion of method, provides the most reliable key to understanding the immanent method of logic, and there is, indeed, much to be learned from the chapter. Yet one should also treat it with caution, for the method Hegel sets out there – the method of the Idea – is in fact two-sided. It combines the method of *immanence* with that same method *reconceived* as the method of the Idea's self-movement; this reconception, however, does not itself preserve the strict immanence of the original method.

One might ask, by the way, why Hegel does not reconceive the method at earlier points in logic. After all, cannot being also be understood retrospectively as *implicitly* finite, infinite, essence, substance and so on? Indeed; but the case of the Idea is significantly different. This is because the Idea – that is, more precisely, the absolute Idea – is the first category that has no distinct content of its own, for its content is nothing beyond the system of categories preceding it. To think of the Idea, therefore, is to think, not of a new and different category,

but of that whole system *as* the Idea. Furthermore, this is to think of that system as having the *form* or *method* of the Idea. The thought of the Idea, therefore, makes it necessary to reconceive, not just earlier categories, but the whole method of logic itself.⁵⁵

The second reconception of the beginning at the end of logic

My aim here is not to provide a full account of the “method of the Idea”, but I will close this chapter with some further brief remarks on the way the beginning is reconceived at the end of logic. At the start of logic, the beginning must be conceived as sheer immediacy, or pure being; then at the end, it must both be conceived as simple being *and* be reconceived as the beginning *of* the totality or Idea to which it gives rise, and thus as implicitly that totality. Yet Hegel points out that the beginning must also be understood in another way: for at the end it must be also be reconceived as that which is made necessary *by* the Idea to which it gives rise. In this respect, the beginning is to be thought of “not as immediate, but as mediated and derived [*als Vermitteltes und Abgeleitetes*]” (SL 748 / LB 300).⁵⁶ The reason for this reconception of the beginning is as follows.

The absolute Idea that emerges at the end of logic is what being proves to be in truth; it is thus “the *absolute truth and all truth*”. Yet since it is the absolute truth (and so, ultimately, what there is), the process through which it emerges must be the process of its *own* self-movement or “self-determination”.⁵⁷ Such self-movement, however, is not the Idea’s unchanging character, but precisely the process through which it *emerges* and comes to be explicitly itself. The Idea, in other words, is and must be its own *result*: the truth that “resides only in the extended course of mediation and in the end” (SL 751 / LB 304). This in turn directly determines the beginning of the Idea’s self-movement: for, if the Idea must be its own result, then at the start it can only be present implicitly or “in itself”, but that means that at first it is “*not* the absolute nor the posited concept, and also not the Idea” (SL 740 / LB 290). Indeed, at the start, the Idea cannot even be implicit (or, at least, it cannot be explicitly implicit): for if it is truly to *emerge*, it must do so from a beginning that is no more than its *beginning*. A true beginning, however, as we saw in the last chapter, can be no more than simple immediacy or being. The nature of the Idea, therefore, *requires* it to start out as mere being and to come to be itself explicitly through the dialectic generated by such being. That initial being is thus made necessary by, and in that sense “derived” from, the very Idea to which it gives rise.

Hegel’s argument can actually be put more simply: the immanent development of being leads necessarily to the emergence of the Idea; this Idea in turn is nothing but the result of *this* development; the nature of the Idea, therefore, *requires* that it begin from being, and so being is itself made necessary by the Idea. Now, of course, a result does not always have to make a specific beginning

necessary, but can be produced by several different beginnings. In speculative logic, however, the Idea is precisely that which is made necessary by *being*, and so it in turn must have being as its logical origin.

The method of the Idea thus brings with it a *twofold* reconception of the beginning of logic. On the one hand, it leads us to reconceive the initial being as not-yet-the-Idea, and thus as deficient or “imperfect”, and, on the other hand, it leads us to think of that initial being as pure being or “immediacy” that is made necessary *by* the self-movement of the Idea. Hegel pulls these two thoughts together in these lines:

the method of truth also knows the beginning to be imperfect [*ein Unvollkommenes*], because it is a beginning; but at the same time it knows this imperfection as such to be a necessity [*ein Notwendiges*], because truth is only the coming-to-itself through the negativity of immediacy.

—SL 751 / LB 303

Note that the *second* reconception of the beginning itself takes logic to involve a *double* process of derivation and justification: namely, the immanent development of pure being, through which the Idea is derived, and the retrospective derivation of being from the Idea (which requires being as its point of departure). Moreover, viewed from the end of logic, these two processes are one and the same: the process in which being gives rise immanently *to* the Idea is itself the process in which being is shown to be necessary *for* the Idea and thereby to be made necessary *by* the Idea. It is important to see that the latter process is not something separate from the former: it just *is* the former process *reconceived* as determined by the Idea rather than by being. Hegel makes this clear both at the end of the *Logic* and, indeed, before it begins. At the end, he writes that “what may at first appear to be different, the *retrogressive grounding* of the beginning and the *progressive further determining* of it, coincide and are the same” (SL 750 / LB 303); and he makes the same point in the essay on beginning that immediately precedes the start of logic itself: “*progression* is a retreat into the *ground*, to the *origin* and the *truth*, on which depends and, in fact, from which originates, that with which the beginning is made” (SL 49 / LS 59-60). (This latter remark, made before the beginning of the *Logic*, thus anticipates the perspective that is gained only at the end of the *Logic*.)

In both places Hegel also explains that this double process of derivation turns logic into a “circle” (*Kreis*) – a circle in which, in words from the earlier passage, “the first becomes also the last, and the last also the first” (SL 49 / LS 60). Readers will no doubt have been struck by the circular character of the argument I attributed to Hegel a couple of paragraphs ago. This circle, however, is not deemed problematic by Hegel, but is embraced by him as necessary: since

being leads of necessity to the Idea, and the Idea just is that which is made necessary by being, then the Idea must in turn begin with being and so makes the latter itself necessary. Logic is thus a circle in which being and the Idea make one another necessary.

Yet one should treat Hegel's image of the circle with some caution, since logic is not just a circle but also involves a *sequence* of steps. Recall that logic is initially just the "*progressive further determining*", or immanent development, of being that results in the emergence of the Idea (SL 750 / LB 303). It is only then, once the Idea has emerged, that this logic must be reconceived as both the progressive derivation of the Idea *and* the retrogressive derivation or "grounding" of being at the same time. It is thus only at the end of logic that logic itself must be reconceived as the circle of reciprocal derivation. Logic does not start out as such a circle, therefore, but comes to be one at the end when the Idea emerges as the ultimate truth.⁵⁸ What is more important than the circular character of logic, to my mind, is thus the *linear* movement from the beginning to the end – the end at which a reversal of perspective occurs and the whole movement is reconceived as the movement, not only of being, but also, and in truth, of the Idea.

It is important to stress that the reversal of perspective at the end of logic is not an optional extra but is necessary and justified: once being has proven to be in truth the absolute Idea, then the development of being *must* be understood retrospectively as the "self-movement of the absolute Idea" (which itself makes the beginning with being necessary) (SL 736 / LB 284). Furthermore, similar reversals occur in later parts of speculative philosophy. The philosophy of nature, for example, sets out the logic through which space makes time, matter, gravity, light and eventually consciousness or "spirit" (*Geist*) necessary; but once spirit has emerged we understand that, although for us "spirit has *nature* as its *presupposition*", in fact "spirit is the *truth* of nature, and is thus *absolutely first* with respect to it". Nature precedes spirit both logically and in time, but from the perspective of spirit, which is the truth of nature, the development of nature is in fact the development of *spirit* itself.⁵⁹ Similarly, in the philosophy of right, the idea of right develops immanently from abstract right, through morality and ethical life, to the state. Yet "the state appears as the *result* of the development of the scientific concept in that it turns out to be the *true* ground", and so "in actuality, therefore, the *state* as such is rather what is *first*". Accordingly, "only within the state does the family first develop into civil society, and it is the Idea of the state itself which divides into these two moments" (PR 274 / 397-8 [§ 256 R]).

These cases are not exactly parallel, since the state precedes civil society "in actuality" (that is, in history), whereas spirit does not precede nature in a similar way but arises only in and from nature (and neither being nor the Idea can be said to be truly "actual" before there is nature).⁶⁰ Nonetheless, *ultimate* logical

priority belongs in each case to the result or “truth” that emerges through the prior logical development, so that one can and must understand logic, the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of right to be the development of the Idea, spirit and the state respectively. Moreover, in each case ultimate logical priority belongs to the resulting truth, rather than the logic that gives rise to it or the origin of that logic, because speculative or “absolute” method in its complete form requires a reversal of perspective when logic reaches its goal. Absolute method requires us to regard the logical development *to* the truth as the self-development *of* that truth, and so it also requires that we understand the beginning of that initial logical development to be made necessary, and so to be presupposed, *by* the very truth to which it leads.

Method viewed from the end of logic: conclusion

Absolute method, or the method of the absolute Idea, thus brings with it a twofold reconception of the beginning of logic. There is, however, an apparent tension between the two: for the beginning, conceived as the beginning *of* the Idea, is thereby conceived as *implicitly* the Idea – and thus as “deficient” or “imperfect” with respect to the Idea – rather than as simple being; whereas the beginning that is made necessary *by* the Idea is precisely sheer immediacy or being. This tension appears in the lines we quoted above, in which the method of truth is said to “know” the beginning to be “imperfect”, but at the same time to know “this imperfection as such to be a necessity, because truth is only the coming-to-itself through the negativity of *immediacy*” (SL 751 / LB 303, emphasis added). This apparent tension, however, does not point to a serious contradiction in the perspective we adopt at the end of logic. It points, rather, to the fact that that perspective itself involves a further doubling: namely, conceiving of the beginning as both mediated *and* immediate at the same time. This is true of both ways of reconceiving the beginning at the end.

We have already noted the doubling that belongs to the first way of reconceiving the beginning (1: 91–3). In this reconception the beginning is conceived as not-yet-the Idea and so as implicitly that Idea; but Hegel insists that this alone must not motivate the further development of the beginning. The method of the Idea also requires that the beginning develop immanently – since method is “the objective immanent form” (SL 739 / LB 289) – and that in turn requires the beginning to be simple immediacy or being without any “not yet”. From the point of view of the Idea, therefore, the beginning is *mediated* (since it is the beginning *of* the Idea), but it is also *immediate*.

The same doubling is evident in the second way in which the beginning is (re)conceived by the method of the Idea. In this second way, the beginning is conceived as derived from and *mediated* by the Idea, since it is made necessary by the Idea itself: it is the beginning that the Idea must have, so that the latter

can be the process of its own emergence or “self-movement”. Yet the Idea can truly *emerge* only if it is not already there at the start, even implicitly (that is, as explicitly implicit), but begins from that which is no more than its beginning. The latter, as we know, can only be pure being or immediacy; so the Idea itself makes such *immediacy* necessary.

This doubling, which belongs to both ways of reconceiving the beginning, reflects the fact that the method of the Idea is not simply an alternative to the method of immanence that begins with immediate being, but is – explicitly – a reconception of the latter. The method and perspective of the Idea thus “knows itself” (through our consciousness of it) to come second, not first: it is and “knows itself” to be the result of a prior development that is strictly immanent and so not determined by the Idea or concept that are to come (but that can and must be reconceived at the end *as* so determined). Hegel makes this clear towards the very end of the *Logic*. He has just explained that the “*progressive further determining*” of the beginning that generates the advance of logic is also to be conceived, from the end, as the “*retrogressive grounding* of the beginning”, and that logic thereby proves to be a “circle” of reciprocal derivation and mediation. He then goes on to insist, however, that logic cannot start from the thought that the beginning is derived and mediated, but must start from a beginning that is utterly *immediate*. In his own words, “the method, which thus coils into a circle, cannot however anticipate [*antizipieren*] in a temporal development that the beginning is as such already something derived; it is sufficient for the beginning in its *immediacy* that it is simple universality” (SL 750 / LB 303) (and so not actually “universality” at all, but mere being).⁶¹ This is true not only at the beginning, but also at the *end*, of speculative logic. At the end of such logic, thought knows being to be the beginning of the Idea and to be made necessary *by* the Idea. Yet it also knows that being leads *to* the Idea, only if it is sheer immediate being and develops purely immanently, without anticipating the Idea that is to come.

This does not mean that the speculative *philosopher* cannot anticipate, in remarks and for the benefit of the reader, later stages in the progress of logic, and, of course, Hegel provides many such anticipations. Hegel’s statement makes clear, however, that such anticipations may play no role in the initial logical development itself – the development that first leads to the Idea – and that that development must be generated wholly immanently by being and the subsequent categories.⁶² Alan White puts the point succinctly: speculative logic does not have a path or way set out for it in advance (by the Idea or anything else), but it “makes its own way”; accordingly, “the speculative thinker in the process of determining the categories, as they arise, for the first time *does not know where, if anywhere, he is headed*”.⁶³ This point, in my view, is crucial, and is missed by all those critics, from Schelling to Heidegger and Derrida, who claim, not just that Hegel knows from the start where he will end up, but that

such knowledge is an integral part of what first takes us there. This criticism, though it has become something of an orthodoxy, is, as I see it, clearly wrong: for the method of logic, even as conceived at the end as the method of the Idea, explicitly rules out any role for anticipation of the goal in the initial *immanent* development of being.

In Hegel's view, it is evident before logic begins that it must start with pure being and that the further advance of logic, if any should occur, must be generated immanently by such being alone (and the categories to which being gives rise). Such a beginning and method of procedure is made necessary by the modern demand that thought be free and self-critical, as well as by the more traditional demand that thought prove its claims without simply taking them for granted. It has now become clear that the method and perspective of the whole that emerge at the end of logic also require logic to begin with being and to proceed immanently. Either way, therefore, the method through which logic *first* proceeds requires us simply to "step back" from pure being and "to allow it free play" (*ihn für sich selbst gewähren zu lassen*), and so to be passive in face of being and categories, with all the activity we have seen this to involve (SL 50 / LS 62).⁶⁴

CHAPTER FIVE

Logic and Metaphysics

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF HEGEL'S PRESUPPOSITIONLESS LOGIC

Hegel's study of the categories of thought – his logic – is presuppositionless in that it does not take for granted at the start how the categories are to be conceived or, indeed, that any specific categories are entailed by thought at all. Nor does that study presuppose as binding the traditional laws of thought, such as the principle of non-contradiction, or the traditional forms of valid inference. It begins with the sheer being of thought and then simply follows – by actively articulating – the dialectic made necessary by such being. Yet Hegel also acknowledges that his presuppositionless logic has its own conditions and *presuppositions*: that logic does not exist in a vacuum, but is made necessary by specific historical circumstances and requires a certain understanding, interest and ability in those who are to engage in it. These conditions and presuppositions, however, do not predetermine how the logic will unfold or what we will discover in its course. They simply make such logic necessary, or they make it possible for us to undertake it and so are what Winfield calls the “enabling” conditions of presuppositionless logic.¹

Such conditions, Hegel tells us, include a prior “familiarity” with the categories, as well as an “interest” in learning more about them (EL 24 / 41 [§ 1]). This is not, of course, to say that we have to be familiar before logic begins with the way in which such logic will conceive the categories, since we are to discover this through logic itself. The point, rather, is that, prior to logic, we must have an ordinary (or a “metaphysical”) understanding of the categories and of the words in which they are expressed, and an interest – grounded, perhaps, in the modern “critical” spirit – in discovering their true nature. Otherwise, there would be nothing to move us to embark on a new, presuppositionless study of them.

Furthermore, it is clear from other remarks Hegel makes that we must retain a “familiarity” with the categories as we proceed through logic. We have certainly to set our familiar conceptions of them to one side, as we derive them anew from the thought of pure being; yet we must also refer to our familiar conceptions to find the appropriate *name* for each category that is derived. The categories themselves are developed purely a priori, but the philosopher names them by selecting “from the language of ordinary life” expressions that “*seem to approximate*” them (SL 628 / LB 154). In order to be able to do this, he or she must have at least “some rough idea” (*so etwas Ungefähres*) of the categories to which those expressions ordinarily refer, and be able to see the similarity between such categories and the ones that arise in logic. Logic thus requires us to adopt a double perspective on the categories: we are not to eliminate our familiar conceptions of them altogether, but to preserve these conceptions while keeping them at bay and not allowing them to determine the course of logic. In this sense, the “familiar forms of thought” must be regarded as “a necessary condition” and “a presupposition to be gratefully acknowledged” in free, presuppositionless logic (SL 12 / LS 9).²

Categories, Hegel writes, “are first set out and stored in human *language*”, so it is through the latter that we first become familiar, more or less explicitly, with the categories (SL 12 / LS 9-10). It is, however, also through the careful use of words (such as “without”) that we keep the categories that emerge in logic free of all presupposed, “external” determinacy (see 1: 75). Language is thus in both respects the necessary precondition of logic, as Hegel conceives it (and the importance of language to such logic is further evident from Hegel’s reflections on the speculative sentence).

Speculative logic, however, also has *historical* presuppositions, as is clear from the previous chapters. In earlier times, Hegel maintains – for example, in ancient Greece – the need to understand logic and the categories “in a deeper sense” was “sparked by the interests of religion, of the state, of law, and of ethical life”. Thought was seen to undermine political constitutions and to attack religion, and generally to “deprive what was positive of its power”, so people began to investigate the claims of thought more closely and “a justification of thinking with regard to its results was demanded” (EL 48 / 71 [§ 19 A3]). In the modern period, inaugurated by the Reformation, the principle of freedom then began to come to prominence in religion, in political life and in philosophy, so thought asserted its right to be “independent” and to “recognize no authority” but its own (VGPW 3: 65). This found expression in Descartes’ demand that philosophy should doubt everything, and so presuppose nothing, in an effort to achieve a beginning unencumbered by the authority of the Church, tradition or even common sense.

Descartes’ explicit motivation, Hegel concedes, is to reach a starting point that is firm, rather than free; moreover, his initial rejection of previous authority

turns out to be incomplete and provisional. Nonetheless, the “drive for freedom” is implicit in Descartes’ demand that we “make no presuppositions”.³ Kant, however, advocates the freedom of thought explicitly, and for this reason requires thought or “reason” to be “set free from all *authority*” (EL 107 / 146 [§ 60 R]). He also insists that reason subject itself to “critique”, which, for Hegel, brings with it the same requirement that reason reject all authority but its own. Hegel notes that Kant’s “principle of the *independence of reason*” has now to be regarded “as the universal principle of philosophy”, though this has so far not changed “the shape of *logic*”.⁴ Logically, however, this principle requires that logic itself become the thoroughly free, non-question-begging study of thought. In Hegel’s view, therefore, his presuppositionless logic is made necessary by, and so *presupposes*, the historical development of philosophy from the Greeks, through Descartes, to Kant and the post-Kantians. It is not simply his own bright idea, but the product of “two thousand years of spirit’s continuous labor” (SL 31 / LS 35).

This history is, of course, governed in large part by the understanding (*Verstand*). It can thus be said that understanding – together with its distinctions – makes Hegel’s logic historically necessary: understanding turns itself into speculative reason. This is evident in the fact that we are led into speculative logic by the demand that thought be free, *rather than* subject to external authority, and, equally, that reason prove its claims and show them to be necessary, *rather than* mere assumptions. In this sense, David Kolb is right to maintain that Hegel’s logic presupposes certain “key dualities” and “dichotomies”.⁵ Yet the very demand that thought be both free and necessary, and so take nothing for granted, itself requires that the distinctions of the understanding be *suspended* at the start of logic; indeed, it requires that all assumptions about thought be suspended and that thought be initially nothing but indeterminate being. Kolb is wrong, therefore, to maintain that Hegel’s logic rests on, and is determined by, “*substantive* presuppositions about the nature of being, reason, and self”.⁶ The aim of such logic is certainly to think freely, rather than unfreely; but at the start we do not know what this means beyond having to begin with the category of pure being. We know, indeed, that further insight into the nature of thought can arise only from the immanent development of that initial category, since no other assumptions are permitted to determine our thinking. Yet we do not know in advance *how* that category might develop, or even *whether* it will develop at all. We do not know in advance, and cannot presuppose, therefore, that thought will be the process of “pure self-development”; we will discover this only if the initial category of being does actually develop.

The fact that speculative logic has historical presuppositions does not, therefore, predetermine the course of that logic. These presuppositions make that logic necessary, and also enable it to be undertaken, but they do not govern

what will emerge in it. Indeed, they cannot govern the latter, since they require that whatever does emerge be determined by pure being alone. In *that* sense one could perhaps say that the presuppositions of logic do, indeed, predetermine its course; such predetermining, however, consists precisely in laying down that nothing predetermines it, and that logic must unfold, if at all, freely and of its own accord. The same must be said about the “discursive [*räsonierend*] justification or explanation of the concept of science” (SL 28 / LS 32) that Hegel sets out in his prefaces and introductory material in his two texts on logic: that, too, tells us in advance that we cannot know, or presuppose, in advance what the course of logic will be.

The fact that speculative logic has historical presuppositions means, by the way, that Kolb and Burbidge are right, in one respect, that speculative logic rests – or at least must initially be understood to rest – on a contingent historical ground.⁷ Yet the conclusion that both appear to draw from this – that under different circumstances the course of logic could have been different – is, in my view, mistaken. For Hegel, there is a rational necessity at work in history leading humanity from its primitive beginnings to full self-consciousness, so in that sense modern freedom, which makes speculative logic necessary, is not just a contingency.⁸ Yet before we begin speculative philosophy, and indeed before we have reached the philosophy of history, no such “rationality” may be assumed to be at work in history; we may not, therefore, regard modern freedom as anything more than the given, contingent situation in which we find ourselves – a situation that could have been different and could become different in the future. This does not mean, however, that in a different situation speculative logic could have taken, or could still take, a different course. If the modern age had not been interested in freedom and self-criticism, but had preferred the authority of tradition or of assumption, then speculative logic would still not have taken a different course; it would simply not have arisen at all. On the other hand, if the modern age had taken a slightly different form, with perhaps different states in the ascendancy, but had still been interested in freedom and self-criticism, there would still only be one way in which speculative logic could proceed: the way that is determined by the thought of pure being. So, either way, changes to the circumstances in which we live would not change the course of presuppositionless logic: they would either mean that such logic would never arise in the first place (or would disappear), or that it would still follow the course determined by pure being. One may certainly understand that logic more or less well, as Hegel himself demonstrates by revising parts of the doctrine of being in the second edition. Yet such revisions do not indicate that alternative routes through speculative logic are possible (dependent, perhaps, on the conditions in which such logic is worked out). They indicate, rather, that it can take considerable time and effort to understand the immanent development of being properly.⁹

In the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel notes that speculative philosophy is made necessary, not only by history, including the history of philosophy, but also by experience more generally and especially by the empirical sciences that rest on experience.¹⁰ As we saw earlier (1: 3–4), experience, for Hegel, presupposes categories without which we could not be conscious of objects at all. Empirical science, however, is the activity of explicitly thinking about, and understanding more fully, the objects of experience. The sciences “do not stop at the perception of *single instances* of appearance”, therefore, but they proceed to uncover the “universal determinations, genera, and laws” in those appearances (EL 37 / 57 [§ 12 R]). In so doing, Hegel claims, scientific reflection transforms the content of experience into something rational and necessary – something that is not just immediately given, but governed and explained by laws. This in turn prompts us not just to take such laws as given, but to explain them and so show them to be necessary, too. We can do this, however, only by *deriving* them from thought (and being) itself. By moving from the givens of experience to the laws and necessities of thought, science thus implicitly points us further to presuppositionless, speculative philosophy. As Hegel puts it,

the experiential sciences carry with them the stimulus to vanquish *the form* in which the wealth of their content is offered as something merely immediate and found, as a manifold of *juxtaposition*, and hence as something altogether *contingent*, and to elevate this content to necessity. This stimulus [. . .] drives thinking on to *develop itself by its own means* [*von sich aus*].

—EL 36 / 56 [§ 12]

The logical derivation of specific laws of nature, such as Galileo’s law of fall and Kepler’s laws of planetary motion, occurs in Hegel’s philosophy of nature,¹¹ but, as we shall see, the conceptual foundation for such laws is provided by the pure logic of being (specifically, the doctrine of measure) (see 2: 262–7). So, in Hegel’s view, science leads to the discovery, through empirical means, of laws governing nature, but the very activity that characterizes science, namely that of moving from experience to rational thought, then prompts us to develop a pure philosophy in which those laws are themselves derived from a presuppositionless starting point. Philosophy thus “owes its development to the empirical sciences”, but it in turn gives to the content of those sciences the “*validation of necessity*” (EL 37 / 58 [§ 12 R]).¹²

It is not enough, however, for speculative philosophy to be the logical outcome of our scientific endeavours and the history of philosophy; individuals must also be capable of embarking on such a philosophy. To this end, Hegel notes, they need “the usual conditions of education”, and also “a trained ability [*Kraft und Geübtheit*] at withdrawing into pure thought, holding onto it and moving within it”.¹³ This latter ability is crucial, for if one is unable to detach

oneself from images and concrete examples, and to find meaning in purely abstract thought, then the abstract categories of speculative logic will prove impenetrable. Indeed, Hegel remarks, the “*unintelligibility*” of philosophy about which people often complain is sometimes just the result of their “inability (which in itself is just a *lack of practice*) to think abstractly” (EL 27 / 44 [§ 3 R]). One way to acquire the ability to think abstractly, Hegel maintains, is to study formal logic. Such logic, as the logic of understanding, is at odds with speculative logic (insofar as the latter proves to be dialectical); yet, for Hegel, it has a valuable role to play in training people in the art of abstraction and thereby preparing them for speculative thought. As Hegel puts it, “there is no doubt that working on this formal [*formell*] logic has its use. Through it, as people say, we sharpen our wits; we learn to collect our thoughts, and to abstract” (EL 52 / 75-6 [§ 20 A]).

Yet speculative thought also requires that we detach ourselves from the rules and principles of formal logic itself, as well as from the distinctions of the understanding; that is, that we give up the “*fixity*” of the understanding and its logic (see PS 20 / 27). We learn to do this in the course of speculative logic itself, which thus provides an “education and discipline of thought” all of its own (SL 21 / LS 22). Yet we must also learn to do this *before* we begin such logic: for it is only *by* giving up the understanding’s distinctions that we can think pure indeterminate being and so can begin logic at all. In the last chapter, however, we suggested that it is understanding itself that focuses on pure being and keeps it free from determinacy (see 1: 84). If that is correct, then at the start of speculative logic understanding must give up, or abstract from, its own distinctions and thereby turn *itself* into presuppositionless thought: we must be led “to rational knowledge *through understanding*” (PS 8 / 11, emphasis added).¹⁴

Before the start of speculative logic, understanding is thus in a complex and somewhat contradictory position. It is required by its own commitments to suspend its distinctions and to begin with pure being: for what makes such a suspension necessary is its own stress on freedom (*as opposed* to mere authority) and on proof and necessity (*as opposed* to contingent assumption). Understanding is thus led into speculative philosophy by *holding to* its commitments, and so being itself, as consistently as possible. Yet understanding is required, by holding consistently to its commitments, precisely to *give up* itself and its “fixity”. This means not only giving up the distinctions and oppositions to which it adheres, and so starting with pure being, but also giving up the primacy of judgement, and so becoming actively *passive* in its thinking. By being consistently itself, therefore, understanding is required to cease being itself. Yet understanding gives up being itself precisely *by* being itself and doing what is characteristic of it, namely *abstracting* (in this case, from itself). Speculative logic thus starts with, and presupposes, an act of abstraction through which understanding

suspends itself and leaves us with no more than the simple being of thought (that the understanding itself holds in view).

In the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel identifies this act with the free “decision” or “resolve” (*Entschluß*) to think without prior assumptions. Philosophy or “science”, he writes, should be preceded by “total *presuppositionlessness*”, and this requirement is fulfilled, he tells us, merely by “the resolve of *the will to think purely*”, that is, “by the freedom that abstracts from everything, and grasps its own pure abstraction, the simplicity of thought” (EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R]). There is, therefore, no mystery about *how* we set aside our assumptions about thought and being: we set them aside by *resolving* to do so (provided that we are trained in the art of abstraction). Indeed, Hegel notes in the *Logic*, this resolve is all that is required at the start of logic. As he puts it, if the beginning is to be simple and immediate (as it must be), all that is needed is “the resolve [*Entschluß*], which can also be viewed as arbitrary, that we want to consider *thought as such*” (SL 48 / LS 58). Speculative logic is made necessary by the history of philosophy from the Greeks to Kant, and it demands of us in turn that we be able to think abstractly. The immediate presupposition of such logic, however, is simply the free decision by the understanding to abstract from everything, including itself, and to consider thought as such, or the sheer “simplicity” of thought.

THOUGHT AND BEING

Speculative logic begins, therefore, with thought in the abstract, pure thought as such, and then sets out what such thought, on further examination, proves to be. This focus on thought (rather than, say, imagination) makes Hegel’s enterprise a logic. Yet Hegel also insists that such logic is the study, not just of thought, but also of *being*, and so is an ontology or metaphysics, too (though not, of course, a metaphysics of the understanding) (see 1: 30). As he puts it, logic is “the science of pure thought” in which “being [*Sein*] is known to be the pure concept [*Begriff*] in itself, and the pure concept to be true being” (SL 39 / LS 46). It is thus the presuppositionless study of thought and the “intellectual intuition” of being at the same time.¹⁵

Yet what justifies this conflation of logic and ontology – a conflation that, for Kant, would be illegitimate? It is justified by the sheer indeterminacy of the thought with which logic must begin. When thought is conceived as judgement or inference, it can also be conceived as *our* activity in contrast to what there is. Speculative logic, however, must start with pure thought in abstraction from all determinate rules and categories, since such logic may have no systematic presuppositions. Conceived in this way, thought is utterly abstract and indeterminate. It is not, however, just nothing; it is present in its “simplicity” and so *is*. Yet it has no determinate character and is, therefore, simple

indeterminate being. It is pure thought *as* pure being, *as* being “without any further determination” (SL 59 / LS 71).

Speculative logic is thus ontology because pure thought, in abstraction from all it is normally taken to be, is itself nothing but sheer being. Hegel highlights the inseparability of pure thought and being in a striking passage at the end of the *Logic*. He first reminds us that in recent years – that is, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – thought and being have been kept strictly apart (for example, by Kant). “It passes as a very important truth”, he writes, “that no being belongs as yet to thought for itself [*für sich*], and that being has a ground of its own independent of thought”. He then argues, however, that this separation of thought and being dissolves when being is understood simply as *being* (rather than existence or nature) and thought is conceived as abstract and indeterminate. As he puts it, “the simple determination of *being* is in itself so poor that [. . .] not much fuss ought to be made about it”; and “the universal” – namely, abstract thought – “is immediately itself this immediate because, as abstract, it is also merely the abstract relation-to-self [*Beziehung auf sich*] which is being” (SL 739 / LB 288). Strictly speaking, as we shall see, the explicit structure of self-relation defines “something” (*Etwas*), rather than pure being.¹⁶ Nonetheless, pure being can be said to relate only to itself, insofar as it is not differentiated from anything else but is simply and immediately “itself”.¹⁷ The same is true of thought in its indeterminate “simplicity”: it is also not differentiated from anything else (since it would then be determinate) and so is the same “abstract relation-to-self” as pure being. Thought in its utter abstraction is thus no more and no less than sheer indeterminate being.

For Kant, general logic “has to do with nothing but the mere form of thinking”, and so tells us nothing positive about what there is (CPR B 78). At the start of Hegel’s speculative logic, by contrast, we are confronted by thought in the abstract *and* by being as such, since the two completely coincide. Such logic, as it proceeds, thus discloses the true nature of thought and of being at the same time. Yet having said this, one might still ask whether logic is able to bring to mind being *itself* as ordinary consciousness conceives it, being that is so to speak “out there”. Pure thought may itself be indeterminate being, but does this mean that logic can disclose what there is “outside” thought? This, however, is the wrong way to think about the matter: for it assumes there is a clear difference between the being of thought and being itself, but at the start of logic no such assumption is warranted.

The being with which abstract, indeterminate *thought* coincides is not “subjective” as opposed to “objective” being, but simply indeterminate being as such, with no further qualification. Moreover, at the start of logic we must set aside our assumptions about *being*, as well as about thought, and so may not take it to be any more than indeterminate being – the very being with which abstract thought coincides. Either way, therefore, we may not assume at the

start that being lies “outside” thought; rather, logic studies, and discloses the nature of, being and so is ontology, since it is the thought of thought itself *as* pure being and being in turn can initially be nothing other than such pure being.¹⁸

One might still insist, however, that this does not really address the worry, expressed above, about being that is “out there”. We have said that being should not be thought to be “out there” in the first place, but at the start of logic should be equated with the utterly indeterminate being to which thought reduces itself in its utter abstraction, and that in this case logic, as the study of pure thought, must also be the study of being. Yet surely there is being *out there* – in the form of nature – and it is not clear from what has been said how logic can tell us anything about it. This worry is allayed, however, as we proceed through speculative logic itself: for it becomes apparent that the indeterminate being with which we begin *itself* mutates, logically, into the realm of finite things and objects, and eventually nature, that surrounds us. Logic thus does, indeed, disclose the true character of what is “out there”. It does not do so, however, by magically bridging the supposed “gap” between thought and things. It does so by first bringing to mind being in its indeterminacy – being that belongs to thought *but is no less being as such* – and then demonstrating that precisely such being, through its own inner logic, turns into being as we usually understand it: being that is “out there”. In speculative logic, therefore, we do not first encounter being over against us and then somehow reach out and bring this being to mind; but we first bring indeterminate being to mind and then discover that such being itself takes on the form of the world about us.

It should be clear from what has been said, therefore, that Hegel does not identify logic and ontology out of a “presumptuous” disregard for the “proper limits” of thought. From a Kantian point of view, thought is inherently discursive and so cannot by itself bring being to mind; the most it can do by itself is conceive of the mere “possibility of an object” (CJ 272 / 315 [§ 76]).¹⁹ From this point of view, therefore, Hegel’s claim to know being directly through pure logic looks like an unjustified assumption.²⁰ To Hegelian eyes, however, exactly the opposite is the case: it is Kant who presumes too much about thought by restricting it – dogmatically – to mere possibility and conceivability. Hegel, by contrast, sets aside all assumptions about thought and begins from the sheer “simplicity” of thought as such – a simplicity that is itself pure, indeterminate *being*. Logic can claim to bring being to mind, therefore, not because it presumes too much about thought, but because it presupposes nothing determinate about thought at all and thereby reduces the latter to pure being. As Hegel himself puts it, the beginning of logic “may *presuppose nothing*, must not be mediated by anything or have a ground [. . .]. It must therefore be simply *an immediacy*, or rather only *immediacy* itself. [. . .] The beginning is therefore *pure being*” (SL 48 / LS 58).²¹

Hegel's argument here is clearly reminiscent of Descartes' *cogito* argument in the *Meditations*. For Descartes, if we strip away all we have taken for granted about thought, we are left with "*I am, I exist*" – the existence of the "I" that is irreducible "so long as I think that I am something".²² Hegel, however, takes the reduction of thought one stage further than Descartes and removes the thought of the "I" itself. This leaves us simply with "*being, pure being* – without any further determination", being that is the starting point of a new metaphysical logic (SL 59 / LS 71).

Hegel thus reverts to the standpoint of pre-Kantian metaphysics by claiming that pure logic can know being after all. He does so, however, by taking *less* for granted than Kant does about thought and being (and less than Descartes, to whom he is otherwise close). This is the "secret" of Hegel that Kantians, among many others, fail to appreciate.²³

BEING AND "BEING FOR THOUGHT"

Hegel's logic is a logic and a metaphysics in equal measure: it is the study of both thought *and* being. Hegel's remarks, however, sometimes veer in one direction and sometimes in the other. They need to be taken together, therefore, if they are not to be subtly misleading.

At times Hegel emphasizes that logic is principally a study of *thought*: "logic", he writes, "is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought" (SL 29 / LS 33). He also insists, however, that logic studies the "content" of thought, and he identifies the latter with "the matter [*Sache*] that exists in and for itself, the logos, the reason of that which is" (SL 19 / LS 19). Logic is thus the study of being, as much as of thought.

Yet, according to some passages, the "content" of thought is not in fact unambiguous being, but is no more than being *for thought*; indeed, the "logos" just referred to is actually described by Hegel as the "product" of thought. In the same vein, Hegel distinguishes the "matter" (*Sache*) of logic from the "singularity of things", equates that "matter" with the "*concept* of things", and states in an earlier passage that this "concept" is itself "only for thought". Indeed, he even claims that "the matter for us can be nothing other than our concepts of it" (SL 16, 19 / LS 14-15, 18-19).²⁴ From these passages, therefore, it appears that logic does not bring *being* to mind at all, but simply thinks a content that is produced by and exists for thought, and that is indistinguishable from the concepts we form of it. Hegel states that, for Kant, "in its relation to the object [. . .] thought does not go out of itself to the object" (SL 25 / LS 27),²⁵ and it would seem that, for Hegel too, thought does not bring to mind anything but itself and its own products.

The impression created by such passages is, however, contradicted by others in which Hegel makes it clear that logic is, indeed, concerned with unambiguous

being. Hegel insists at one point, for example, that logic must start with “*being*, and nothing else, without any further determination” (SL 47 / LS 58). Such being is not to be thought of as existence, substance, or nature; but nor is it to be conceived as being-*for*-thought, or being-that-is-produced-*by*-thought. It is to be conceived simply as being, without further qualification.

As noted above, Hegel also maintains that in logic “being is known to be the pure concept in itself, and the pure concept to be true being”, and he states that the content of logic is “the reason of that which is” (SL 19, 39 / LS 19, 46). These passages indicate, however, not only that logic deals with being, but also that such being proves in the course of logic to be more than pure being, namely “concept” or reason (or “Idea”). This is not to say that being turns out merely to be *for* thought after all, but that it proves to be rational *in itself*: logic begins with pure unqualified being, but, as it proceeds, it shows being itself to *become* reason.

This in turn alters, or expands, the meaning of the term “thought” in speculative logic. Thought is an aspect of our identity: it is the activity of comprehending the world through categories and principles that inform, more or less explicitly, our mature consciousness. Speculative logic is the presuppositionless study of such thought. It begins by conceiving of it as indeterminate being and then derives further categories of thought from such being; in so doing it thinks anew, and so clarifies, categories with which we are already familiar in ordinary life. The being from which logic starts is, however, not just the being *of thought*, but indeterminate being *as such*: being without further qualification. The categories which arise in logic are thus inherent in thought *as pure being* and so are inherent in both thought *and* being; that is to say, they are both “subjective” and “objective”. They belong to the activity of thought and are the determinations through which the latter makes sense of the world; but they also belong to being, and constitute the many ways or forms of being that are inherent in the latter.

As the categories emerge, being proves to be progressively more rational and “conceptual”, and it eventually proves to be the *concept*. This means, however, that the *thought* to which the categories belong must itself be regarded as both subjective and objective: it is our thought and yet at the same time the reason, thought or “concept” that being itself proves to be. As Hegel writes, “the *content* of pure science” is thus “objective thought”; indeed, since it is both subjective and objective, it must actually be understood “in the absolute sense as *infinite*” (SL 29, 41 / LS 33, 49).

Hegel notes in the *Encyclopaedia* that this does not mean all beings, including natural objects, are to be ascribed conscious thought or “mind”; only human beings, and other finite rational beings, are capable of conscious thought (EL 56 / 81 [§ 24 A1]). In Hegel’s view, thought is objective, or infinite, because being contains precisely the same categories and exhibits the same rational form as our thought does. As he explains:

Thought is an expression which attributes the determination contained in it primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that *understanding, that reason, is in the objective world*, that spirit and nature have *universal laws* to which their life and their changes conform, then it is conceded just as much that the determinations of thought have objective value and existence [*Existenz*].

—SL 30 / LS 35

This is true, by the way, of all the categories derived in logic: all belong equally to thought and being. In the course of logic, therefore, thought proves to operate with categories such as “something”, “finitude”, “one”, and so on, but at the same time being itself turns out to take the form of being-something, being-finite and being-one. In the logic of essence Hegel describes “existence” (*Existenz*) and “objectivity” explicitly as “various kinds of being”;²⁶ and this is true even of thought-structures, such as judgement and syllogism, that are usually taken to belong solely to our thinking. For Hegel, it is not only we who make judgements and formulate syllogisms, but things in the world exhibit the logical structures of judgement and syllogism, too. As he puts it, “*all things are a judgement*” and “*everything rational is a syllogism*”, though a closer examination of exactly what this means will have to wait for another occasion.²⁷

So if we now pull together the various remarks Hegel makes about logic, the picture we get is this. Thought is, indeed, our activity. Pure being at the start of logic is thus the result of our act of abstraction and is there only for our thought, not for the senses or imagination. Further categories are then rendered explicit by us (though on the basis of what is implicit in the preceding categories themselves) and so are also there only for thought. Yet what is there at the start for thought is precisely *being* as such, being that is simply and immediately itself. Our activity of thought thus brings to mind, not just a figment of our own conceiving, or being-that-is-dependent-on-thought, but being itself, without further qualification (and in the course of logic our activity of rendering explicit continues to disclose the truth of being). In Hegel’s view, indeed, it is only thought’s activity that can bring such being to mind – the senses detect only colours and sounds, and imagination deals only in its own creations – so Hegel is justified in saying that being, or the “concept” that being proves to be, is “only for thought” (*nur für das Denken*) (SL 16 / LS 14). Yet to repeat: this being, of which thought alone can be aware, is nothing less than *being* itself – being in its own undiluted immediacy that then develops of its own accord into further determinations of itself. Since this is the case, logic, or the study of thought and its categories, must at the same time be ontology, or the study of being.

Hegel’s position is thus significantly different from that of his fellow post-Kantian, Fichte. For Fichte, from the philosophical or “idealist” perspective,

being may be thought of only as standing in relation to, and so being there *for*, our free intelligence. We can never speak simply of “being”, but “the type of ‘being’ that is here in question can only be a being for us”.²⁸ Note that Fichte draws an absolute distinction between the two alternatives he considers: being is to be conceived *either* (by the enlightened idealist) as “being for us”, *or* (by the ignorant dogmatist) as “something original” and thus as the ground of all thought and consciousness. Being cannot, however, be understood to be both, for to do so would be to display an “utter confusion” in the use of concepts. As Fichte puts it, “a *being merely for us*, which is nevertheless supposed to be an *original* being that cannot be derived from anything else: What can this mean? Who is this ‘we’ for whom alone this being is supposed to exist?”²⁹

The difference between Fichte and Hegel is, therefore, this. In Fichte’s view, being, for thought, is no more than being *for thought*; it is not, and cannot be, something original and immediate in its own right. In Hegel’s view, being, for thought, is also being *for thought* (since thought knows that it alone can bring pure being to mind); but it is equally *being* for thought or simple being as such – being that is “original” (and, as nature, precedes our thinking of it). Indeed, from a Hegelian perspective, being must be understood in this way, for otherwise we misunderstand what the term “being” means. Fichte takes “being” to be something derivative, something that arises for thought only in contrast to the activity of thought and so can be conceived only in relation to – or *for* – that activity.³⁰ This, however, is to say both too much and too little about “being”. It is to say too much, since the term “being” denotes, not being-for . . . , or being-in-relation-to . . . , but pure and simple *being*: simple immediacy that just is what it is. Yet this means in turn that Fichte says too little, for he fails to see that being, as sheer immediacy, is necessarily “original” in the sense he rejects, and not merely being-for-thought. It is true that, for Hegel, thought’s own activity brings being to mind at the start of logic by abstracting from everything determinate about itself and reducing itself to indeterminate being; but this activity brings to mind sheer indeterminate *being*, not just being that is relative to this activity, or mere being-*for-thought*. This capacity to bring being to mind is, in fact, one of the things that makes thought distinct from all other forms of mindedness. Sensation, feeling and imagination remain caught up in some way in subjectivity: sensation is (principally) the way in which *I* am affected by things outside me, and imagination is the work of *my* subjective freedom in which “the moment of *being* [*des Seienden*] is still lacking”.³¹ Thought, by contrast, is able to abstract from itself and think of that which *is* in its own right without regard to my thinking it. It does this at the start of speculative logic and brings to mind being in its indeterminate immediacy; but it also does this in everyday life when it conceives of what we sense and intuit as *being* there.³² Without thought, therefore, we would be unable to do logic but also unable to

say simply that “this leaf *is* green” (EL 27 / 45 [§ 3 R]). Indeed, we would have no idea that there is such a thing as “being” at all.

LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS

For Hegel, therefore, speculative logic is at the same time metaphysics (or ontology), as he states explicitly in both the *Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. In the former, for example, he talks of “the logical science which constitutes metaphysics proper or pure speculative philosophy” (SL 9 / LS 6); and in the latter he writes that “*logic* coincides with *metaphysics*, with the science of *things* grasped in *thoughts* that were taken to express the *essentialities of the things*” (EL 56 / 81 [§ 24]). In the *Logic* Hegel maintains that the “objective logic” in particular – the account of being and essence – “takes the place of the former *metaphysics* which was the scientific edifice set over the world that was to be built through thoughts alone” (SL 42 / LS 50). Yet, as I suggested above, he considers all categories throughout logic to be forms of being as well as thought, so the whole of logic – including the doctrine of the concept – is in fact a metaphysics.

As the last quotation indicates, however, speculative logic does not coincide exactly with the former – pre-Kantian – metaphysics, but rather “takes the place” of the latter. So what precisely are the differences between the two? First, unlike pre-Kantian metaphysics, speculative logic does not presuppose the authority of understanding (*Verstand*): it does not assume from the outset that thought is minimally judgement or that the categories, as the understanding conceives them, are definitive. Indeed, Hegel states, the objective logic is precisely the “true critique” of such categories, since it begins by setting them to one side, and then, as it derives the categories anew from pure being, it shows them in truth to be dialectical (see SL 42 / LS 51).

Second, logic does not claim to know, through categories, certain intelligible “objects” (*Gegenstände*), such as the soul or God, that are presupposed by reason (EL 68 / 97 [§ 30]). For some metaphysicians, such as Leibniz, God is a transcendent entity who is distinct from the world he creates; for others, such as Spinoza, God is the immanent cause of the world (and, in Hegel’s view, Plato’s forms are also meant to be immanent in things).³³ All metaphysicians, however, presuppose a given, determinate reality and proceed to tell us *about* that reality. Speculative logic, by contrast, begins from being that is so utterly indeterminate, it is neither an “object”, nor even just “something” at all. Such being proves in the course of logic to be “the infinite”, “concept”, “Idea” and eventually nature, and in that sense does, indeed, become the *object* of thought. Yet logic still does not just become thought *about* such an object: for it discovers the logical structure of being-as-object by unfolding, and so *within*, the necessary structure of thought itself. In Hegel’s own words,

logic has nothing to do with a thought *about something* [*über Etwas*] which stands outside by itself as the base for thought [. . .]; rather, the necessary forms of thought, and its specific determinations, are the content and the ultimate truth itself.

—SL 29 / LS 34

Speculative logic, therefore, is significantly different from pre-Kantian metaphysics. Such metaphysics takes itself to shed light, through understanding, on a reality that it assumes from the start to be “out there” (either within or beyond nature); speculative logic, however, takes itself to be “pure self-developing self-consciousness” or thought within which the nature of being itself is disclosed (see SL 29 / LS 33). Nonetheless, the two forms of philosophy agree – *contra* Kant – that thought by itself can know being, and it is for this reason that speculative logic can be said to “take the place” of previous metaphysics and, indeed, to be metaphysics itself. Kant denies that thought can disclose the nature of being on its own, for the most it can do by itself, he thinks, is conceive of what is possible (see 1: 109). By contrast, Hegel declares, “the older metaphysics had in this respect a higher concept of thought than now passes as the accepted opinion. For it presupposed as its principle that what is known of things and in things by thought is alone really true in them”. Such metaphysics thus believed, as speculative logic does, that “thought in its immanent determinations, and the true nature of things, are one and the same content” (SL 25 / LS 28).³⁴

Yet even in this respect there is a subtle difference between previous metaphysics and speculative logic. In Hegel’s view, pre-Kantian metaphysics belongs to “the naive [*unbefangen*] way of proceeding”, which is “still without consciousness of the antithesis of thought within and against itself”, and for *that* reason it believes that thought can bring the true nature of things before the mind (EL 65 / 93 [§ 26]). Everyday consciousness, we are told, also lives in this naive belief, but speculative logic does not. The “antithesis” within thought that is at issue here is the clear distinction that thought draws (or can draw) between itself and being, and Hegel insists that speculative logic (unlike previous metaphysics) is fully conscious of this distinction. “Those who repeat over and over again”, he protests, “that *thought and being* are *distinct* [*verschieden*], surely ought to presuppose from the first that philosophers are familiar with this fact too” (EL 99 / 136 [§ 51 R]). This distinction does not prevent thought and being coinciding in the way we have described, but it is preserved in the idea that *thought and being* are “are one and the same content”. Indeed, Hegel argues, it is “because they are at the same time known to be *distinct* [*unterschieden*] (yet not to exist for themselves), that their unity is not abstract, dead and inert, but concrete” (SL 39 / LS 46).

By the way, to say, as Hegel does, that pre-Kantian metaphysics *lacks* consciousness of the distinction between thought and being is not to deny that

it distinguishes between conscious subjects and things in the world and understands that thought could be in error. It is to say that, for such metaphysics, thinking can in the main “go straight [*geradezu*] to the objects” and determine their nature (EL 65 / 93 [§ 26]). Metaphysical philosophers certainly have to work out what is to be understood by, for example, “substance”; but in so doing (in Hegel’s view) they take themselves, without hesitation, to be disclosing what it is to *be* a substance. They do not think, therefore, that rational cognition requires us to reflect explicitly on *our* thought and its categories, and to explain how *our* thought can tell us about *things*. Whether particular pre-Kantian philosophers are “naive” in the way Hegel describes is, of course, a matter for debate. Descartes would seem not to be quite so naive, at least in certain respects. Spinoza’s “naivety”, however, is evident in the first axiom of his *Ethics*: for he goes “straight to the objects” and states, without further ado, that “whatever is, is either in itself or in another”.³⁵ As Hegel would put it, it never occurs to Spinoza “to make ‘is’ the subject matter of our inquiry” (EL 59 / 85 [§ 24 A2]).

Speculative logic is not so “naive”, and the difference between it and pre-Kantian metaphysics is explained by the emergence, between the two, of *Kantian* critique. Kant’s philosophy is important, in Hegel’s view, because it subjects the categories of the understanding to explicit critical scrutiny (even if inadequately) and sees in them the conditions of any possible object of cognition.³⁶ By so doing Kant transforms the nature of metaphysics and moves it in the direction of speculative logic: for his critique requires us to examine our *thought*, and the categories it contains, if we are to have a priori “metaphysical” knowledge of objects. As Hegel puts it, therefore, critical philosophy already “turned *metaphysics* into *logic*”; or, in Kant’s own words, it forced “the proud name of an ontology” to “give way to the modest one of a mere analytic of the pure understanding”.³⁷ At the same time, Kant thereby introduces a new kind of logic, namely transcendental logic, that “takes the place” (to use Hegel’s phrase) of previous metaphysics. General logic, for Kant, examines only the “mere form of thinking” in abstraction from possible objects: it lays down the rules, such as the law of non-contradiction, that thought must obey regardless of the object concerned (CPR B 78). Transcendental logic, by contrast, lays down the rules that thought must obey if it is to cognize a determinate *object*, rather than just think without contradiction and without error in inference. Indeed, it determines what counts for thought *as* an “object”, and so is a “logic of truth” rather than just of formal validity.³⁸

In his *Logic* Hegel explicitly acknowledges that what he calls “*objective logic*” “would correspond in part to what for him [Kant] is *transcendental logic*” (SL 40 / LS 48). Kant thus not only makes Hegel’s presuppositionless logic necessary through his emphasis on freedom and his anti-dogmatism, but in his transcendental logic he also prefigures the coincidence of logic and metaphysics

that we find in Hegel's logic. And yet, of course, Kant falls short of the complete coincidence that Hegel has in mind, because he gives the categories what, for Hegel, is an "essentially subjective significance" (SL 30 / LS 35). Through the categories, in Kant's view, we understand what counts as an object of cognition, but we do not thereby cognize things as they may be "in themselves" and we do not bring being itself to mind (restrictions that amount to the same thing for Hegel, though not for Kant [see 1: 31–5]). The objectivity constituted by Kant's categories is thus, in Hegel's eyes, a *subjective* objectivity, an objectivity *for us*.³⁹ This means in turn that the metaphysics with which Kant's transcendental logic coincides is merely a "metaphysics of experience" (as W.H. Walsh calls it): it can "anticipate the form of a possible experience in general" (and the form of possible objects of experience), but it cannot disclose or "anticipate" a priori the structure of being itself.⁴⁰ Kant's transcendental logic, unlike Hegel's speculative logic, is thus not a revised version of metaphysics in the strong sense, as Spinoza or Leibniz would conceive it.

This is the case because, for Kant, thought by itself, without the support of sensuous intuition, can think only what is possible or conceivable, not what *is*.⁴¹ Kant thus uncouples being from thought in a way that Hegel does not. In Hegel's view, pure thought brings to mind being that then itself – in the course of speculative logic – proves to be the sphere of objectivity with which we are familiar: the sphere of finite things, causes, objects and nature. For Kant, by contrast, being (in the form of "immediacy") must be given in *sensuous intuition* before it is thought as something objective (though this occurs at once, not sequentially);⁴² being is not brought to mind directly by thought itself.

As we saw on 1: 34, the matter is complicated by the fact that, for Kant, *thought* thinks something to "be" such and such through the copula of a judgement. This does not, however, alter the point we are making, for the "is" of the copula does not itself bring *being* in the sense of "immediacy" to mind, but it serves rather to "distinguish the objective unity of given representations from the subjective": it enables us not just to feel a body's weight, but to say that it is heavy *objectively* (CPR B 142). Furthermore, Kant reinforces the sharp distinction between thought and being later in the first *Critique*, when he writes that "whatever and however much our concept of an object may contain, we have to go out beyond it in order to provide it with existence [*Existenz*]" (CPR B 629). These lines confirm Hegel's interpretation of Kant (in this respect, if not in every one): for Kant, there is a strict opposition between thought and being, so "being cannot be derived from the concept or analysed out of it" (EL 98 / 135 [§ 51]).⁴³

Now Hegel's logic, as we know, begins by suspending the sharp conceptual distinctions and oppositions to which Kant adheres and focusing on the simple being of thought (which is just being *tout court*). Yet, as we have also noted, Hegel insists that his logic, unlike "naive" metaphysics, *preserves* the distinction

or “antithesis” between thought and being in their unity. This does not mean that the initial category of being is *itself* a concrete unity of different moments, since it is purely abstract, indeterminate being with “no difference within it” (SL 59 / LS 71). Hegel’s point is rather that *we* know, at the start and throughout the course of logic, that what we are considering has a twofold character: whereas Spinoza’s attention is directed principally towards substance, we are explicitly aware in speculative logic that we are examining *thought* and *being* together. The beginning of logic is thus a concrete unity *for us*, even though it is itself quite abstract.⁴⁴

As I see it, the speculative logician remains conscious of the difference between thought and being because such logic is preceded and made necessary by Kant’s critical philosophy in which that difference is absolute. Indeed, Hegel moves towards speculative logic on the basis of that difference (as well as other distinctions, such as those between freedom and authority, and proof and mere assumption [see 1: 103]). He does not, therefore, just assert against Kant that thought and being are one, but he takes off from Kant’s own explicit focus on *thought* (as opposed to being or existence). Hegel notes that Kant’s “critical philosophy subjects to investigation the validity of the *concepts of the understanding* that are used in metaphysics”, and he understands his own project to consist in “clarifying” (or “purifying”) these categories.⁴⁵ That project thus takes the form of a *logic* undertaken in the full consciousness that it is a study of *thought*.

Yet such logic begins precisely with the act of suspending all the conceptual distinctions assumed by the understanding and starting from the “simplicity of thought”.⁴⁶ Furthermore, this simplicity is, explicitly, neither thought, nor freedom, nor the process of proof, but just sheer indeterminate *being*. The difference between thought and being, which Kant takes for granted, thus disappears when philosophy focuses on pure thought in the abstract, since such thought itself proves to be nothing but being. At the same time, however, we retain a reflective awareness of that difference, for we know that this being is the initial form taken by pure thought, and that in examining such being, and so doing ontology, we are also examining thought, and so doing logic. At the start of logic, therefore, we have a double consciousness of what is before us: we know it to be pure *being*, but also to be being and thought together. These two modes of consciousness, however, occupy different levels of insight. At the primary level, what is before us is nothing but being – being “without any further determination” (SL 59 / LS 71) – and it is this indeterminate being alone that moves logic forward (by vanishing into nothing and so proving to be “becoming”). At a further reflective level, however, we are conscious that such being is the indeterminate immediacy of thought and the first category of thought, just as we also know that it is the result of an act of abstraction that presupposes a history going back through Kant and Descartes to the Greeks.

The unity-in-difference of being and thought is thus different from the unity of being and nothing that we encounter in becoming and then in *Dasein*: for being itself vanishes into, and so unites itself with, nothing in becoming, but it is we, the philosophers, who understand being to be the initial indeterminate being of thought.

By the way, at the start of logic, just as pure thought in the abstract is nothing but being, so pure being is only there *for thought*: only thought – not sense perception or imagination – is capable of the radical abstraction required to bring pure being to mind. Whether we start with thought or being, therefore, suspending all assumptions leads us to the same result: the unity of the two that constitutes the “*element*” of logic (SL 39 / LS 46). This unity, however, is not itself the subject-matter of logic; the latter is simply being as such, and our task, as logicians, is to trace the logical development of such being alone. In this sense, logic, as Hegel conceives it, is straightforwardly ontology. Yet *we* are also reflectively aware that such ontology is logic – the discovery of the structure of being within the structure of *thought*. In this respect, Hegel’s logic builds directly on Kant’s focus on the categories of thought (and is no longer “naive” like earlier metaphysics).⁴⁷

Speculative logic, therefore, does not just displace pre-Kantian ontology or metaphysics: for it remains a metaphysics in the strong (rather than “transcendental”) sense, and derives the basic forms of being from pure being itself. Yet such logic is also a post-Kantian metaphysics that derives such forms of being by deriving the categories of thought with which they coincide: it discovers the structure of being *within* the structure of thought, rather than taking itself to be thought *about* a given reality or substance.⁴⁸ Moreover, it is also post-Kantian in a further sense: for it is a thoroughly self-critical discipline that conceives those categories anew, without presupposing the oppositions of the understanding, and thereby shows the categories to be dialectical. As Hegel puts it, therefore, “speculative logic contains the older logic and metaphysics; it preserves the same forms of thought, laws, and objects, but it develops and transforms them with further categories” (EL 33 / 53 [§ 9 R]).⁴⁹

PHENOMENOLOGY AND LOGIC

The direct way into speculative logic could not be simpler: we just have to “resolve” to suspend, or abstract from, all assumptions about thought (and being) and to “consider *thought as such*” (SL 48 / LS 58).⁵⁰ Such resolve may be preceded by the demand that thought be free and self-critical or by insight into the nature of beginning, but the resolve itself, which manifests itself in the act of abstraction, is all that is needed to enter speculative logic. Such resolve leaves us with the simple being of thought, or indeterminate being as such – being that is the least that thought can be and (except for pure nothing) the least that it can

think.⁵¹ Speculative logic, initiated by the free resolve to think “purely”, thus begins with pure *being*, without further qualification, and so is ontology as much as it is logic.

There is, however, another way into speculative logic that we also have to consider: phenomenology. I have discussed Hegel’s phenomenology and its relation to logic elsewhere, so my remarks here will be brief.⁵² The need for phenomenology arises because ordinary, non-philosophical consciousness adheres, like metaphysical understanding, to certain unquestioned distinctions. These, however, are not just conceptual distinctions, but belong to whole “shapes of consciousness”, like “perception” or the “unhappy consciousness”, in which there is a difference, indeed, antithesis, between the knowing subject and the object known. As Hegel puts it in the preface to the *Phenomenology*, consciousness “knows objects in their antithesis to itself, and itself in antithesis to them”, and this remains true even when the object concerned is another self or (as in the unhappy consciousness) one’s own self in an alienated form (PS 15, 21 / 20, 28). The “antitheses” within consciousness do not prevent it from being “naïve” in the manner described above.⁵³ Yet Hegel claims that, especially when they are “carried over to reason”, they “block the entrance to philosophy” (SL 25 / LS 27), because philosophy begins with the *identity* of subject and object, of “certainty” and “truth”, of thought and being. For speculative philosophy, the necessary forms of thought – the categories – are “the content and the ultimate truth itself” and contain within themselves the necessary forms of being, but to consciousness, which keeps itself and its object or truth distinct, this standpoint of philosophy is the “inversion of truth”.⁵⁴ The standpoint of consciousness, therefore, prevents one from entering speculative philosophy and adopting its point of view.

Moreover, there is no implicit imperative in ordinary consciousness, as there is in philosophy, to challenge the distinctions to which it adheres. Philosophy, historically, has been a discipline that questions received wisdom and seeks the truth; if philosophy sticks rigidly to certain distinctions, we can thus expect that it should challenge them, and especially so, if like Kant’s philosophy, it proclaims itself to be critical. Ordinary consciousness, by contrast, is characterized not by a questioning attitude but rather by its “*immediate certainty* of itself”: it knows what it knows and sees no good reason to depart from that.⁵⁵ There is nothing in such consciousness itself, therefore – or, at least, not obviously anything – that moves it, or even should move it, to doubt its own distinction between subjects and objects, and to consider that speculative logic might not be a perverse enterprise after all.

Yet speculative logic, which begins with pure being and so is also ontology, is made necessary by modern freedom and cannot simply be dismissed as perverse. How then are we to persuade ordinary consciousness to take such philosophy seriously and even engage in it? We can do so, Hegel thinks, only by undermining

the distinctions which consciousness holds dear, and especially the fundamental distinction between subject and object, between “certainty” and “truth”. *Phenomenology* is precisely the process of undermining such distinctions; and its role thereby is to lead consciousness from its own “antithetical” standpoint to that of philosophy, or, as Hegel puts it, to provide consciousness with a “ladder” to philosophy (PS 14 / 20). Phenomenology, for Hegel, is thus not primarily a positive discipline that derives, and shows to be necessary, certain basic structures of consciousness (though it is that); it is, more importantly, a negative, deconstructive discipline that loosens the hold that familiar certainties have on consciousness and so removes the obstacle they constitute to its entering philosophy. In Hegel’s words, it is the “scepticism that is directed against the whole range of phenomenal consciousness” and that “brings about a state of despair about all the so-called natural ideas, thoughts and opinions” (PS 50 / 61).

In this sense, phenomenology fulfils a similar function to the free act of abstraction we have described above: both serve to set aside or suspend assumptions and distinctions that are taken for granted by non-speculative thought. Yet there is also a significant difference between the two: for through the act of abstraction *we* suspend such assumptions, but phenomenology shows how the certainties of consciousness undermine *themselves*. Phenomenology shows this in the following manner.

Each shape of consciousness takes itself to be conscious of a certain object; so sense-certainty relates to a simple “this, now” or “this, here”, and perception relates to a “thing” with “properties” (PS 59-61, 69-70 / 71-2, 82). Phenomenology then sets out the way in which each shape *experiences* its distinctive object, and it demonstrates that in such experience the object itself changes its character; so, for example, the quite *simple* object of sense-certainty proves in fact to be “a *plurality* of nows” or a “*complex* of many heres” (PS 64 / 75-6, emphases added). Such experience is in each case generated *by* the object as it is first conceived to be (that is, in our example, by the simple now or here); yet in that very experience the object is revealed *not* just to be what it is first conceived to be, but to be something different. The initial conception of the object, or initial “certainty”, entertained by each shape of consciousness thus undermines itself in and through the experience to which it gives rise.⁵⁶

The result of this experience is then taken up by a further shape of consciousness and affirmed as its object; so the complexity that emerges in the experience of sense-certainty is affirmed by perception as a thing with many properties. In the experience generated by this thing, the latter then in turn proves to be other than it is first conceived to be: the stable thing with properties proves in fact to be the dynamic transition of one aspect of itself into another. This dynamism is then affirmed by understanding as the movement of force and its expression, and in the experience generated by such force the latter also proves to be something different, and so on.⁵⁷

What arises in the course of phenomenology is thus a series of shapes of consciousness, whose “certainty” in each case undermines itself autonomously without the intervention of the phenomenologist, who simply articulates and renders explicit the experience which the certainty generates.⁵⁸ Moreover, since such experience is that which *must* be generated, logically, by the relevant certainty, rather than one that just happens to occur in history, phenomenology as a whole shows that, and how, the certainties of consciousness necessarily undermine themselves. Such necessity is lacking, it should be noted, when the assumptions of the understanding are suspended by our “resolve” or act of abstraction, for the latter, Hegel states, can be “viewed as arbitrary [*eine Willkür*]” (SL 48 / LS 58). This resolve is, indeed, demanded – and in that sense made necessary – by modern freedom and Kantian anti-dogmatism. Yet it is a *free* act that thought can refrain from carrying out, so in that sense nothing necessitates the suspension of the understanding’s assumptions: whether they are suspended depends completely on us.⁵⁹ Phenomenology, by contrast, does not just argue that the certainties of consciousness should be set aside, and then leave it to our freedom to do so; it shows that, logically, those certainties must, and do actually, undermine themselves.

We saw earlier (1: 10–11) that the understanding’s assumptions may also be said to undermine themselves, insofar they are subject to an intrinsic dialectic: the infinite that is opposed to the finite, for example, turns itself into a finite infinite. Yet this dialectic, as Hegel presents it *prior* to logic itself, is laid bare by a merely “historical and argumentative [*räsonierend*]” manner of thinking, for it arises from what the understanding is found *in history* to assume (EL 64 / 92 [§ 25 R]). The dialectic thus lacks true necessity because it rests on, and so is determined by, a given, determinate historical foundation. In speculative logic, on the other hand, dialectic will be truly necessary, since it will be generated immanently by an utterly indeterminate starting point, namely pure being. Phenomenology can also lay claim to true necessity, in Hegel’s view, since it, too, proceeds immanently from a logically primitive and simple starting point, rather than basing itself on a given, determinate historical position. This starting point is more determinate than that of logic, because it consists in the “opposition” that characterizes consciousness, rather than indeterminate thought or being. Yet it consists in that opposition in its sheer immediacy, that is, in the simple difference between *this* bare I and *this* bare object here and now (see PS 58-9 / 69-70). Phenomenology, in other words, starts from consciousness as such, with no further qualification, just as logic starts from pure thought as such, with no further qualification (which is the same as pure being). The dialectic set out in phenomenology thus belongs completely to, and is wholly immanent in, consciousness as such; and since it is wholly immanent, and is not guided by historical contingencies, it is the process in which the certainties of consciousness undermine themselves with autonomous necessity.

Now to cut a long story short, phenomenology concludes by showing that the very opposition between subject and object, or certainty and truth – the opposition that defines consciousness – undermines itself and issues in the unity or identity of the two. This identity is, of course, the “element” of speculative philosophy, or, as Hegel calls it, “absolute knowing”. The latter thus proves to be the final “truth” that is made necessary by the self-undermining of the certainties of ordinary consciousness:

Absolute knowing is the *truth* of all the modes of consciousness because, as the course of the *Phenomenology* brought out, it is only in absolute knowing that the separation of the *object* [*Gegenstand*] from the *certainty of oneself* has completely dissolved itself: truth has become equal to certainty and this certainty to truth.

—SL 29 / LS 33⁶⁰

Phenomenology is required because consciousness – which insists on the distinction between subject and object – regards speculative philosophy – which begins from their identity – as the “inversion” of the truth. Phenomenology demonstrates, however, that consciousness itself leads, through its inherent logical necessity, *to* such philosophy. In this way, Hegel maintains, phenomenology justifies the standpoint of speculative philosophy to ordinary consciousness.

Indeed, he claims, only phenomenology can provide such a justification or “proof” of speculative philosophy: the standpoint or “concept” of philosophy “is not capable of any other justification than is produced by consciousness as all its shapes dissolve into that concept as into their truth” (SL 28 / LS 32). Both the “resolve” to think purely and phenomenology free us from unquestioned assumptions. Yet the resolve does so through an act of abstraction that is in one respect arbitrary. Moreover, it is demanded and “justified” by a concern for radical freedom and self-criticism that does not belong essentially to ordinary, everyday consciousness (see 1: 120) (even though it provides the modern historical context in which ordinary people now live their lives). That resolve cannot, therefore, provide an unambiguous justification of the standpoint of philosophy that would satisfy ordinary consciousness. By contrast, phenomenology frees us from the assumptions of consciousness – or frees consciousness to become thought (see SL / 41 / LS 49) – by showing how such assumptions undermine *themselves* with necessity. In so doing it justifies the standpoint of speculative philosophy to ordinary consciousness in a way that the resolve does not.

Having said this, Hegel does not think that such justification through phenomenology is required by everyone. It is required only by those who are wedded to the certainties of *ordinary consciousness* and need to be persuaded

of the merits of speculative philosophy. If, however, one is not so wedded but is prepared to let go of one's certainties, one can bypass phenomenology and enter speculative philosophy directly by simply resolving to think purely. Indeed, the spirit of modern freedom and critique actually demands that those who are attuned to it take this direct route: for it requires them to take nothing for granted, and so to suspend all our favoured assumptions, and so to start with indeterminate being. Whether or not one needs to pass through phenomenology to philosophy thus depends on the standpoint from which one begins. For those who are tied to the certainties of everyday life (but who are not completely closed to philosophy), phenomenology alone will show speculative philosophy to be an intelligent and justified, rather than perverse, activity. On the other hand, those who are moved by the spirit of the modern world to think freely and critically can, in my view, dispense with phenomenology and proceed directly to speculative philosophy: they must simply resolve to think purely and they are thereby already at the start of philosophy.

To my knowledge, Hegel does not state explicitly anywhere in his texts that phenomenology does not have to precede philosophy. Yet he implies as much when he talks in the *Logic* about the nature of "beginning". The resolve to think purely can be grounded in the twin imperatives of freedom and critique; but it can also be grounded in the proper understanding of beginning, because "beginning" itself requires us to suspend all determinate assumptions and to start from pure being (as we saw in this volume, chapter 3). Hegel maintains, indeed, that a proper grasp of beginning suffices all by itself to take us (via the resolve that it makes necessary) into speculative philosophy, and he puts the point as follows: "it thus lies in the *nature of the beginning itself* that it should be being and nothing else. There is no need, therefore, of other preparations to enter philosophy, no need of further reflections or access points" (SL 50 / LS 62). This clearly implies that entry into philosophy does not require us to pass first through phenomenology and that the latter is thus, for some at least, dispensable.

Yet phenomenology and the free act of setting aside assumptions are not simply alternative routes into philosophy: for the path through phenomenology must itself be followed by such an act before philosophy proper can begin. Phenomenology leads to "*logic or speculative philosophy*" by demonstrating that the immanent development of consciousness issues in "pure" or "absolute" knowing.⁶¹ In such knowing, Hegel explains, "the separation of the *object* from the *certainty of oneself* has completely dissolved itself", so that "truth has become equal to certainty and this certainty to truth" (SL 29 / LS 33). This knowing is thus the *unity* of object and subject, or of being and thought, that constitutes the "*element*" of speculative philosophy (SL 39 / LS 46). Phenomenology does not, however, lead directly to the *beginning* of philosophy itself, for an act of abstraction or of "setting aside" must still be carried out between the two.

One passage in the essay on “beginning” in the *Logic* makes it look as though phenomenology does lead seamlessly to the start of logic. Hegel states that we should begin philosophy or “science” by simply “considering” or “taking up” the pure knowing with which phenomenology ends; and if we do so, he maintains, we will find ourselves with nothing but the pure being with which logic starts. This is because pure knowing collapses of its own accord *into* pure being. Pure knowing is the unity of certainty and truth, subject and object, or thought and being, which consciousness in its various forms held apart. In that unity, however, “all relation to another” disappears, since its moments are no longer *other* than one another.⁶² Neither, therefore, is mediated by or differentiated from an other, and the unity itself thus proves to be “distinctionless” (*das Unterschiedslose*). Without an internal distinction, however, pure knowing can no longer be knowing of anything, and so “ceases itself to be knowing”. Yet it does not disappear altogether into nothing, but retains its immediacy. Such immediacy, however, is featureless since it lacks internal distinction, and so is “only *simple immediacy*” or sheer indeterminate being. In this way, Hegel maintains, pure knowing collapses of its own accord into pure being (SL 47 / LS 58).

Yet the transition from the end of phenomenology to the start of logic is in fact not quite as seamless as these remarks by Hegel suggest: for he insists that while taking up pure knowing, we must also actively keep at bay any other reflections that could creep in. If logic is to proceed immanently from the end of phenomenology, then we must take up what is there before us, “*setting aside* all reflections and all opinions that we otherwise have” (SL 47 / LS 58, emphasis added). An act of “setting aside” or abstraction must be undertaken, therefore, between the end of phenomenology and the start of logic to get us from one to the other.

In the paragraphs I have just examined, Hegel does not tell us what the reflections are that have to be set aside. He makes it clear elsewhere, however, that they include the reflection that pure being at the start of logic is the result of, and mediated by, *phenomenology*. Pure being, he writes, is the “unity into which pure knowing withdraws [*zurückgeht*]”, and as such it presupposes the development of consciousness, articulated by phenomenology, that issues in such knowing. Understood in this way, therefore, “this *pure being*, this absolute immediate, is just as absolutely mediated” (SL 50 / LS 61). Conceived *as* mediated, however, being is no longer pure immediate *being*. Indeed, as Hegel points out later in the *Logic*, the reflection that pure being is mediated actually turns it into a form of non-immediacy or “essence” (SL 337 / LW 3). At the start of logic, however, being must be understood in its immediacy as pure *being*, because only pure being can be the absolute beginning. We must, therefore, abstract from the fact – or actively *forget* – that being is a mediated result. This is not to deny that pure being is, indeed, a result – the “unity into which pure knowing withdraws”. At the beginning, however, “it is just as

essential that it should be taken only in the one-sidedness of being purely immediate, *just because* it is here as the beginning” (SL 50 / LS 61). Logic, insofar as it is made necessary by and so presupposes phenomenology, must thus begin by severing its connection with the latter and beginning anew from sheer being without further qualification or presupposition.

To repeat: phenomenology leads to pure knowing, which (according to the passage discussed above) collapses logically into pure being. In this sense phenomenology results in pure being itself – the being with which logic begins. Yet phenomenology results in pure being that is understood precisely to be a *result* and so in that sense *not* to be pure being after all. Phenomenology thus leads to the pure *immediate* being with which logic begins, only if we abstract from the fact that such being is the mediated result of phenomenology and take it to be pure being as such.

To my mind – though Hegel does not make this point himself – it is also necessary at (or before) the start of logic to sever the connection with phenomenology in another sense: for the logician must abstract from some of the concepts that are said at the end of phenomenology to form a unity in pure or absolute knowing. In the *Logic*, such knowing is understood to be the unity of thought and being, indeed to be thought *as* pure being. At the end of the *Phenomenology*, however, pure knowing is described in several different ways. It is said to be the knowing “for which what *is in itself* only is, in so far as it is a *being for* the self and a being of the *self* or concept”, and in that sense it is understood as the unity of being and thought (PS 486 / 524). Yet pure knowing is also conceived as the unity of “substance” and “subject”: Hegel writes, for example, that such knowing is “the knowing of *this subject* as *substance* and of substance as the knowing of its act” (PS 485 / 522). This latter formulation is especially important, since it echoes the point on which, in the preface, everything is said to depend, namely, that the “true” must be grasped “not only as *substance*, but equally as *subject*” (PS 10 / 14). Logic, however, begins with pure being, not (like Spinoza’s *Ethics*) with substance; at the end of phenomenology, therefore, thought must actively set aside the concepts of substance and subject in favour of “being” and “thought” before it can focus on thought as pure being and begin logic.⁶³

This, by the way, is not to deny that being will itself prove to be the unity of substance and subject (albeit in a reduced sense) in the “concept”.⁶⁴ Yet such a unity cannot be taken for granted at the start of a logic that is meant to be non-question-begging, but it emerges only later in that logic’s development. At the conclusion of phenomenology, therefore, the latter not only justifies the standpoint of pure knowing, as the unity of thought and being, but it also *overshoots* the beginning of such knowing by understanding it to unite substance and subject. This is understandable because the shapes of consciousness whose self-undermining is traced by phenomenology are themselves informed by

categories that are more complex than bare “being” (with the exception of sense-certainty). The unity that eventually results from that process of self-undermining will thus itself involve more complex categories.

Yet that unity, however it is conceived, marks the end of the shapes of consciousness and the emergence of *pure knowing*; whatever else it may do, therefore, phenomenology justifies the standpoint of such knowing. Since that is all that is required of phenomenology, anything in the result of the latter that goes beyond the beginning of pure knowing can be set aside at that beginning. Indeed, it must be set aside, since that beginning – as a *mere* beginning and as presuppositionless – may be no more than thought-as-pure-being.

At the start of logic, therefore, we must “take up” pure knowing as the unity of thought and being, indeed as pure and simple being, but set aside the idea that it unites “subject” and “substance”. We must also abstract from the fact that pure being is the result of, and mediated by, phenomenology, and we must take it in its immediacy as *pure being*. Otherwise, phenomenology would not actually lead us to the start of logic as Hegel understands it. So, whether we enter philosophy through the free resolve to think purely or through phenomenology, an act of abstraction is required before logic itself can begin. Indeed, if, through this act, we are to have pure being in mind, we must also abstract from or set aside the very fact that it is secured by *abstraction*. In Hegel’s words, “in being, when taken in that simplicity and immediacy, the memory [*Erinnerung*] that it is the result of complete abstraction [. . .] is left back behind the science” (SL 75 / LS 92). Speculative logic thus in fact presupposes a double, self-suspending act of abstraction: one that abstracts from everything, *including itself*, to leave us with nothing but sheer being.⁶⁵

PIPPIN’S INTERPRETATION OF HEGEL’S LOGIC

I have argued that, however one enters speculative logic, the latter, as Hegel conceives it, has being as its subject-matter and so is as much ontology as it is logic. In apparent contrast to this, Robert Pippin defends what he calls “a nonmetaphysical interpretation of Hegel” in his seminal study, *Hegel’s Idealism*.⁶⁶ Yet Pippin’s Hegel is not in fact an utterly non-metaphysical thinker, as Pippin has emphasized in more recent work but is also evident in *Hegel’s Idealism* itself.⁶⁷

Pippin’s Hegel is certainly not a proponent of pre-Kantian rationalist metaphysics in the mould of Plotinus, Spinoza or Leibniz: he does not, for example, put forward “any neo-Platonic theory of conceptual emanation, with some ‘cosmic spirit’ ejecting the world in its becoming self-conscious”. He is a post-Kantian thinker, who eschews direct claims about “the world” or “spirit” and is “interested in the conditions of the possibility of knowledge”.⁶⁸ Since these conditions, for Pippin’s Hegel, are “‘internal’ to any subject’s *self-*

understanding”, his logic is thought about thought and subjectivity itself. Such logic does not, therefore, present some direct “intuition” of the nature of being, but it determines “the conditions under which any *subject* must think in order to think objectively at all” (emphasis added); that is, “what is required in order for a subject to judge self-consciously about objects”; that is, “the only ways in which a subject could take itself to be in relation to objects”. As Pippin also puts it, Hegel’s logic provides “an account of all possible account-giving” by self-conscious subjectivity.⁶⁹ In this sense, his logic is non-metaphysical. Yet, for Pippin’s Hegel, categories are not merely ways in which *we* have to think; they also determine the structure of any possible *object* of cognition. In this sense Hegel’s logic is a “‘logic’ of ‘objects in their truth’” and thus metaphysical.⁷⁰

Yet a worry lingers that Hegel’s logic, as Pippin conceives it, falls short of true metaphysics, of a genuine understanding of *being*. Such logic sets out “all that ‘being’ could intelligibly be”;⁷¹ but it does so by discovering what *thought* considers to be “intelligible” being or objectivity, and so surely discloses only what being must be *for thought*, rather than being itself. Pippin, however, has a powerful response to such a worry, namely that the distinction between being for thought and being itself is itself unintelligible: as he puts it, “there is, in Hegel’s final position, no possible *contrast* between our conceptual framework and ‘the world’” (or “reality”).⁷² This is because “any ‘reality’ side of such a dyad is just another thought-determination”; or, in Hegel’s words, “the matter for us can be nothing other than our concepts of it”.⁷³

Hegel’s claim that a possible object is what *thought* determines it to be constitutes the core of his “idealism”, as Pippin conceives it; but such idealism has “*no realist competitor*”, since any “reality” or “being” we may take to lie outside thought is itself posited *by* thought.⁷⁴ For Pippin’s Hegel, therefore, being as *thought* conceives it is all that being can intelligibly *be* (for thought): his idealism is the only “realism” possible. Yet note that in denying that Hegel’s idealism has a realist competitor, Pippin assumes that such idealism and direct realism (were it intelligible) would be incompatible: combining the two, he writes (echoing Fichte), would be a “gross” confusion.⁷⁵ In my view, by contrast, this is not true.

On my reading, speculative logic must be understood in two ways at the same time. It is the *logical* account of the categories of thought through which alone being is intelligible, and at the same time it is the direct *ontological* study of being in which a category is known to be (to use Pippin’s phrase) a “rational determination of the real”.⁷⁶ Insofar as such logic is a logic, we can say with Pippin that it is also a metaphysics in his sense, since the categories that are unfolded determine what being must be thought to be, or what counts as “being”, as “objectivity”. Unlike Pippin, however, we can also say that such logic is the *direct* thought, or intellectual intuition, of being and thus a metaphysics in a pre-Kantian, rationalist sense.⁷⁷

Pippin denies that Hegel conflates his account of categories and concepts with any “direct (i.e., not transcendently deduced) claim about reality”, and maintains that, for Hegel, “the issues are conceptual throughout”.⁷⁸ Moreover, Pippin would dismiss the very idea of such a conflation as contradictory or incoherent, since for him it combines two mutually exclusive options (one of which is not actually an option anyway). The first option is the logical one that his Hegel endorses, namely that thought is always conscious of what *it* determines to be intelligible; the second is the strong metaphysical one that his Hegel rejects, namely that thought can directly disclose “the metaphysically real beyond, or behind, or ‘more real’ than what can be understood [. . .] by ‘thought’s examination of itself’”.⁷⁹ The two exclude one another, because thought cannot directly disclose what lies beyond thought if it is always mediated by its own conception of intelligibility.

As I understand it, however, the ontological dimension of Hegel’s logic does not consist in direct consciousness of being that (purportedly) lies *beyond* thought; it consists in direct consciousness of the being *that pure thought itself is*.⁸⁰ At the start of such logic, thought thinks its own pure simplicity, but such simplicity is precisely sheer indeterminate *being*; thought thinks being, therefore, in thinking nothing but itself. This is not to deny that the logic is, indeed, “thought’s examination of itself”. At the outset, however, thought conceives of itself as simple being – being that is not the being of thought in particular but sheer being as such. Logic is thus initially ontology, not just as the derived thought of being, but as the *direct* thought or intuition of being *schlechthin*.

In the rest of logic, we then discover what being itself proves to be, and at the same time discover the categories that are inherent in thought. All the determinations derived in the course of logic are thus both categories of thought and ways of being. The reflection that they are categories of *thought* belongs, however, to *us* and is not explicit in the determinations themselves; in themselves they are just ways of being: being something, being finite and so on. In the third part of the logic, being proves to be “concept”, rather than simple being (or substance); but this concept is still an ontological structure, rather than a form of conscious thought: it is a structure inherent in being as such.⁸¹ Only towards the very end of the logic does being itself prove to be *cognition*, though even here what emerges is the onto-logical structure of cognition, rather than cognition in the form of conscious thought.⁸² The latter emerges only in the philosophy of spirit, so it is only at that point that it becomes clear within the system itself, rather than just for us, that categories are forms of conscious thought as well as forms of being.⁸³

Pippin misses the directly ontological dimension of the logic, I think, because he has a different understanding of its beginning from the one put forward here. He understands logic to begin with the indeterminate thought *of* being,

but not with thought *as* indeterminate being. This reflects his understanding of the transition from phenomenology to logic and of the role of logic itself.

I suggested above that whether we enter logic through an act of abstraction or through phenomenology, we must begin logic with simple being, and so logic itself must be ontology. For Pippin, by contrast, phenomenology leads, not just to pure being, but to the self-conscious study of *thought*; or in Pippin's own words, "the result of the *PhG* was not simply to introduce us to pure immediacy, but [. . .] that result is the beginning of *the Logic*, or 'Thought for itself'".⁸⁴ The immediacy with which logic begins is thus not just immediacy or pure being as such – it is not thought *as pure being* – but it is rather the *thought of pure being*.

The task of logic, in Pippin's view, is then to consider this thought explicitly *as a thought*; more precisely, it is to examine whether the indeterminate thought of "being" can be "a possible thought of an object".⁸⁵ Pippin argues, however, that the thought of "being" cannot be such a thought, since "the mere thought of anything at all" – with which he equates the thought of "being" – "is not a determinate thought of anything".⁸⁶ Further and progressively more complex thoughts are thus required for the thought of an object to be possible; and, as the logic proceeds, we discover that the conceptual conditions of such a thought, and so of a determinate object of thought, include reflective determinations, such as essence and appearance, as well as "spontaneous positing reflection", "possibly self-conscious judgment" and the whole self-determining network of categories that Pippin refers to as the "Notion".⁸⁷

For Pippin, therefore, Hegel's logic is not the directly ontological study of being that I take it to be. Furthermore, from my perspective, Hegel's logic, as Pippin understands it, is both question-begging (rather than presuppositionless) and transcendental (rather than immanent). It is question-begging because it assumes (or stipulates) at the start that thought should be the thought of an "object" and that such a thought must be "determinate"; and it finds the thought of "being" wanting because it is not determinate in the way that is required.⁸⁸ It is transcendental because it seeks, beyond the thought of mere being, the "necessary conditions for the determinate thought of any object".⁸⁹ Logic does not therefore consider the thought of pure being by itself, without reference to the need for determinacy, and it does not trace the purely immanent development of each category, without regard for the "conditions" of "determinate thought". Hegel's logic, as Pippin interprets it, is thus significantly different from the strictly immanent science that I take it to be.

My aim here, however, is not to examine in detail Pippin's reading of Hegel's logic. It is merely to show why, as I see it, he does not understand that logic as a direct (rather than derived) metaphysics or ontology. He does not do so, as I have indicated, because he takes such logic to be concerned at the start solely with the *thought of pure being*, and to remain concerned throughout its course

with the *thoughts* needed for the determinate thought of an object. He thus does not see, or at least accept, that Hegel's logic actually begins with thought, or pure knowing, *as pure being*, and so is the study of thought and the direct consciousness of being at the same time.

In my view, by being directly ontological Hegel's logic discloses the nature of being or reality in a stronger sense than Pippin acknowledges. From Pippin's own perspective, however, there can be no "stronger" sense of being than the one his Hegel provides. For Pippin's Hegel, thought determines what counts as "being", and this, for thought, exhausts what being can *be* at all. For thought, therefore, there is no meaningful difference between being as thought must conceive it – or being *for thought* – and being itself: the latter just is the former. In this respect, I was wrong to maintain in *The Opening of Hegel's Logic* that, for Pippin himself, Hegel's logic sets out "all that 'being' could *intelligibly be*", but not "all that 'being' could intelligibly *be*".⁹⁰ For Pippin's Hegel, there is, and can be, no difference between the two, and for that reason logic counts as metaphysics.⁹¹

On Pippin's understanding of Hegel's logic, therefore, nothing of being or reality is missed by equating it with being as thought conceives it. Yet it seems to me that something *is* missed: namely, the idea that being is not only what thought conceives it to be, what thought "counts" as being, but also *being*, wholly in its own right. Moreover, it is precisely thought that conceives of being in this way. Thought actually has a double-edged conception of being: on the one hand, it equates being with what it *conceives* being to be, but, on the other hand, it conceives of being as *being* that is irreducibly itself. This is not to say that thought necessarily thinks being to be beyond thought altogether; the "metaphysical" thought of a "beyond" does, however, give ill-formed expression to the idea that being is irreducible to, rather than simply equivalent to, being for thought.

For Pippin's Hegel, being is inconceivable except as "conceptually mediated objectivity".⁹² Being is thus just what thought conceives it to be, or being *for thought*, and no other being or reality is intelligible. For my Hegel, by contrast, thought not only understands the necessary structure of being for thought, but it is also, and takes itself to be, directly conscious of irreducible *being* itself.⁹³ Moreover, it takes itself to be directly and immediately conscious of being through the very mediation of its concepts: thought or "intelligence" "knows that what is *thought, is*" (*weiß, daß, was gedacht ist, ist*) (EPM 202 / 283 [§ 465]).

This direct consciousness of being is, in Hegel's view, precisely what was claimed by pre-Kantian metaphysics: as he puts it, such metaphysics maintained "that that which *is*, is known *in itself*, through being *thought*" (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28]).⁹⁴ For Hegel, therefore, pre-Kantian metaphysics is not deluded in laying claim to direct ontological consciousness of being (as Pippin thinks), but it is

quite right to do so, and speculative logic lays claim to the same consciousness. That logic, as I understand it, is thus precisely what, according to Pippin, it cannot be: an account of the categories through which alone being or “objectivity” is intelligible – that is, a revised form of Kantian transcendental logic – and at the same time the direct consciousness, through such categories, of being – that is, a revised form of pre-critical metaphysics.⁹⁵

The irreducibility of being to thought is, I think, missing from – or, at least, underemphasized in – Pippin’s account of Hegel’s logic, and so in *this* sense I would still claim that Hegel’s logic, as interpreted by Pippin, does not set out “all that ‘being’ could intelligibly *be*” (even though I now accept that Pippin himself would deny this).⁹⁶ On my reading, however, such irreducible being is precisely what thought is aware of at the start of logic: for what thought begins with is not just the thought of being, or being for thought, but thought *as being itself* – pure being without further qualification. Such being will prove in the course of logic to be more than just being, that is, to be finitude, infinity, substance and so on; but it will not cease to be irreducibly itself, even when it becomes the “idea of cognition”. (Indeed, even thought as a mode of self-conscious spirit – the thought that undertakes the logic – is a mode of being: it is *being-that-has-become-thought*.)

The nuances here are fine, but they are, in my view, important. For Pippin, Hegelian logic equates ‘being’ with being as it is conceived *by thought*; no other being or reality, for thought, is intelligible or possible. This strikes me as right as far as it goes, but it is also in need of further elaboration: for being, as thought itself conceives it, is not just equivalent to what thought *conceives* it to be, but is irreducible being in its own right. This is not now to drive a new wedge between thought and being: for thought, there is and can be no other being than that which is knowable through categories, than that which is discovered through, and indeed *in*, thought itself. Yet through the categories thought understands such being to have an immediacy and a life of its own that is irreducible to what thought “counts” as being; and it takes its categories to disclose the nature of this irreducible being.⁹⁷ Pippin, it seems to me, misses, or at least downplays, this idea.

Pippin denies that Hegel’s logic is the direct, rather than “transcendentally deduced”, consciousness of being, and he denies that it conceives of being in any stronger sense than that of “being for thought”. Accordingly, he rejects the claim that such logic is in any way a “precritical” metaphysics.⁹⁸ For Pippin, therefore, Hegel’s metaphysical logic is not, and cannot be, a post-Kantian Spinozism. That, however, is exactly what I understand Hegel’s logic to be.⁹⁹

PART TWO

Quality

CHAPTER SIX

Being, Nothing, Becoming

PURE BEING

Speculative logic begins with the thought or category of being; yet this thought brings to mind *being* itself in its immediacy. Such logic is thus from the start both a logic and a metaphysics.

Note that at the start of speculative logic being is not to be understood as nature, substance or existence, each of which has a determinate, and more or less complex, logical structure. Nor is it the being of *something*, or the being expressed in the copula of a judgement. Being is to be understood simply as pure indeterminate being. In the course of logic, being will, indeed, prove to be existence, substance and eventually nature. It will turn out, therefore, that being is not just *pure* being but takes the form of space, time and matter. In the rest of his philosophy, Hegel will then show that being also takes the further forms of organic life and human self-consciousness or “spirit” – self-consciousness, whose partial and often confused understanding of both thought and being, coupled with its modern claim to freedom, makes speculative logic necessary. At the start of such logic, however, we may not take existence, nature or spirit for granted, for our task, as free, self-critical thinkers, is to discover how being is to be understood *without* assuming that we already know. We must, therefore, set aside all determinate assumptions about being and begin from the least that it can be: namely pure and simple *being*.

In the *Logic* Hegel points out that the Eleatics, notably Parmenides, were the first to declare pure being to be “the absolute and sole truth” and to state that “*only being is, and nothing is not at all*” (SL 60 / LS 73). Yet there is a subtle difference between being as conceived by Parmenides and being at the start of Hegel’s logic. For Parmenides, being is all there is and “nothing is not”; in that sense, being stands alone, since there is no “nothing” with which it could be contrasted.¹ Nonetheless, Parmenides understands being, at the same time, in

explicit *contrast* to nothing (or not-being): it is not simply pure being, but being-that-is-not-nothing. This is precisely what makes being “changeless”: for, *as* not-nothing, being neither arises from, nor passes into, nothing. In Parmenides’ words, “it exists without beginning or ceasing”, but, “remaining the same and in the same place, it lies on its own and thus fixed it will remain”. Parmenides goes on to claim that “strong necessity holds it [being] within the bonds of a limit” – a limit that preserves being as being and keeps it apart from nothing. In spite of the fact that there is no nothing, therefore, being is explicitly distinguished by an inner necessity *from* the nothing that doesn’t exist.²

Hegel, by contrast, conceives being in its sheer immediacy without distinguishing it explicitly from nothing. Being is not thought of as different from nothing, essence, determinacy or anything else; it is thought simply as pure *being*.³ As Hegel writes, pure being “is equal only to itself and also not unequal with respect to another; it has no difference [*Verschiedenheit*] within it, nor any outwardly”. The absence of any explicit difference from anything else – even from nothing – is, in Hegel’s view, integral to the purity and simplicity of being. Being, he states, “would not be held fast in its purity” if it contained “any determination or content” through which it is “posited as distinct from an other”: for in that case it would not be pure being, but being-*as-opposed-to*-what-it-is-not (SL 59 / LS 71).

As Hegel conceives of it, therefore, pure being is utterly indeterminate. It is not explicitly contrasted with anything else – not even with nothing – since that would render it determinate, but it is sheer *indeterminate* being, or “indeterminate immediacy” (SL 59 / LS 71). As we saw on 1: 55-6, however, pure being may not be conceived explicitly *as* “im-mediacy” or “in-determinacy”, since that, too, would turn it into something determinate, namely the negation of mediation and determinacy. At the start of logic being must be thought *in* its utter indeterminacy and immediacy – and so without being explicitly contrasted with determinacy or mediation – as pure and simple being.⁴

One should bear these considerations in mind when reading the sentence fragment with which the paragraph on being begins: “*being, pure being* – without any further determination” (SL 59 / LS 71). The words “without any further determination” (*ohne alle weitere Bestimmung*) do not serve to define being *as* lacking determination, *as* in-determinate: they do not build the lack of determination explicitly into being itself. Were they to do so, they would turn pure being into “being-without-determination” and thereby undermine the simplicity and indeterminacy of *pure being*. So what are Hegel’s words intended to do? They are intended to preserve the simplicity of being by holding all further determination at bay, by keeping being *free* of determination – including the determination that consists in being “without determination”.

At the start of his logic, Hegel first thinks simply of “*being, pure being*”. He then adds the words “without any further determination” to prevent us from

determining or defining being any further. We are thus to think of being *and then stop*. In this way, we keep being pure, and free of all determination and contrast with anything else. Pure being can certainly be *described* as indeterminate, since it is precisely that; but, if we heed the injunction to stop contained in Hegel's opening sentence fragment, being will not be *defined* as non- or indeterminacy. It will be defined (if that is the right word) quite simply as *being*.

As Dieter Henrich makes clear, a similar function is exercised by other phrases in the opening paragraph on being.⁵ Being is said by Hegel (in lines quoted above) to be "not unequal with respect to another" and to have "no difference within it, nor any outwardly". These phrases do not, however, ask us to build the idea of "not differing from another" into being explicitly. They ask us to keep any thought of differing from another *away* from being altogether, and so to think of being as pure being alone. In Henrich's words, they "declare the thought of being to be completely free of structures of reflection", such as "difference".⁶

This point may seem somewhat obscure, but it is important. Hegel is aware that we are *reflective* beings who think in terms of contrasts and use complex categories. At the start of the *Logic*, however, we are to think pure being without further contrasts. We can do this, Hegel thinks, if we are careful in our use of language. We must use familiar words and categories such as "equal", "unequal" and "difference", as well as everyday terms such as "without" and "not", not to further define being by means of contrasts, but to keep being pure and simple. Only in this way, he thinks, will we discover what else, if anything, being proves to be purely of its own accord.

The idea that we must hold certain thoughts at bay in order to think pure being also appears elsewhere in the *Logic*. As we saw earlier, we are led to pure knowing, which itself "withdraws" into pure being, by the development set out in the *Phenomenology*.⁷ In this respect, therefore, pure being is the result of, and so mediated by, that prior development. If we are to think of such being as pure *being*, however, we must abstract from, and hold at bay, the thought that it is mediated and think of it as absolutely *immediate*. We must, as it were, actively "forget" that pure being is a mediated result and focus on its immediacy as pure being; otherwise, the being that results will not be thought as pure *being* at all.

Moreover, only in this way, Hegel claims, can the thought of pure being, to which consciousness is led by phenomenology, be the *beginning* of speculative logic. As he puts it, "pure being is the unity into which pure knowing withdraws" at or after the end of phenomenology, and so "this *pure being*, this absolute immediate, is just as absolutely mediated": it is a *result*. At the beginning of logic, however, "it is just as essential that it should be taken only in the one-sidedness of being purely immediate, *just because* it is here as the beginning" (SL 50 / LS 61).

The other way into speculative logic – besides phenomenology – is to set all assumptions about thought and being aside in a free act of abstraction. Once

again, however, at the start of logic we must hold at bay the thought that pure being is the result of a prior process (in this case, of abstraction): as Hegel puts it, we must leave that thought “back behind the science” (SL 75 / LS 92).⁸ Otherwise, we will think of being as mediated, not as the pure immediate being that the idea of beginning requires it to be. Being will be understood explicitly to be something mediated in the second book of the *Logic*, the doctrine of essence; at the start of logic, however, being must be thought as pure being in its immediacy. To think of being in this way, we must first abstract from all we ordinarily take being to be; but we must then abstract from, and set aside, the very fact that pure being is the result of abstraction. Only thus will the process of abstraction lead to the thought of being as pure and immediate, rather than as mediated result (or “essence”).⁹

Many philosophers, such as Adorno, deny that there is such a thing as simple immediacy.¹⁰ Moreover, Hegel himself states that “there is nothing in heaven or nature or spirit or anywhere else that does not contain both immediacy and mediation” (SL 46 / LS 56). In a truly critical philosophy, however, we cannot simply assume this to be the case; indeed, we cannot take anything for granted about being or thought. We have no choice, therefore, but to begin with pure being in its immediacy.¹¹ We can think being in its purity and immediacy if we use familiar concepts and words, as Hegel does, to keep being *free* of other thoughts. In this way, we conceive of being not as explicit im-mediacy or indeterminacy, but as pure being alone “without any further determination”. Our task, as philosophers, is then to consider what else, if anything, such indeterminate being proves to be.

BEING AND NOTHING

Having started with the thought of pure being, Hegel now surprises us by claiming that pure being is so indeterminate, it is in fact *nothing* at all: “being, the indeterminate immediate is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than nothing” (SL 59 / LS 72). This is not to say that we have been thinking of nothing all along and so were never thinking of being in the first place. Hegel claims that we start with pure *being*, but that due to its utter indeterminacy this being immediately proves to be nothing. As he puts it, pure being immediately “*vanishes*” into nothing (SL 60 / LS 72).

At this point, Hegel’s understanding of being differs, not just subtly, but sharply from that of Parmenides. Parmenides conceives being from the outset in opposition to nothing: being *is*, whereas nothing *is not*. Furthermore, this opposition is absolute: being does not emerge from or pass into nothing, but remains always and only being. Being *is*, and it never proves to be anything other than being: it is changeless, “uncreated and imperishable”.¹²

Hegel, by contrast, conceives of being by itself, without contrasting it explicitly with nothing or anything else. Pure being, as Hegel understands it, is

thus not determinately distinct from nothing, but utterly indeterminate. It is pure being alone, without the “limit” that, for Parmenides, “keeps it in on every side”.¹³ By virtue of its indeterminacy, however, pure being proves to be *nothing* at all. The opposition between being and nothing that Parmenides holds to be absolute thus disappears before our eyes.

Hegel considers the vanishing of pure being into nothing to be a matter of the utmost simplicity. As he puts it, “because *being* is posited only as immediate, *nothing* breaks out in it only immediately” (SL 74-5 / LS 92). Some further comments are, however, necessary in order to avoid certain misunderstandings of Hegel’s argument.

First, it is important to note that “being” and “nothing” are not just different names for the same thing.¹⁴ There is an immediate difference between being and nothing themselves: “*they are not the same*”, but “*absolutely distinct*” (SL 60 / LS 72). Pure being is not defined in opposition to nothing as being-that-is-not-nothing; nonetheless, in its simple immediacy as pure *being*, being is the utter opposite of nothing, and conversely (as Hegel puts it in the first edition of the *Logic*) “nothing is here the pure absence of being, the *nihil privativum*” (WLS 59). In proving to be nothing, therefore, being “*vanishes in its opposite*” (SL 60 / LS 72).

Second, pure being vanishes logically – of its own accord – into nothing. Hegel’s claim is not just that *we* take pure being to be nothing because *we* find it to be empty and lacking in determinacy. If that were the case, being would remain what it is, but it would prove to be nothing in our eyes: it would be experienced *by us* as nothing. We would be the ones, therefore, who move from the thought of being to the thought of nothing, but being would not itself vanish into its opposite. The transition from being to nothing at the start of Hegel’s logic is understood in this way by Hegel’s contemporary and former friend, Schelling. In his lectures “On the History of Modern Philosophy” (1833-4) Schelling presents that transition as follows:

after I have posited pure being, I look for something in it and find nothing, because I have forbidden myself to find anything in it precisely by the fact that I have posited it as pure being, as mere being in general. Therefore it is not at all being itself that finds itself, but rather *I* find it as nothing.

—HMP 140 / AS 4: 549-50

This cannot, however, be the right way to understand what Hegel is saying. Speculative logic is to show how the category of pure being – and thereby pure being itself – develops *immanently* (if at all) into further determinations. Since that is the case, we cannot be led from being to further determinations by considering how *we* experience or think of pure being and any subsequent categories. As Henrich puts it, if logic wants to develop categories from one

another, “reflection on their being thought cannot count as the moving principle of their progress”.¹⁵ Reflecting on how something is thought or experienced by us, or by consciousness, is characteristic of *phenomenological* analysis, but it cannot be what moves forward a wholly immanent *logical* study of the categories of being and thought.¹⁶

Third, Schelling misunderstands the initial transition in Hegel’s logic in a further way: in his view, Hegel declares pure being to be nothing, only because pure being is *not yet* being in its real and proper sense. Schelling takes his lead from a passage in Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia Logic* in which Hegel writes that “the matter *is not yet* in its beginning” (*die Sache ist noch nicht in ihrem Anfang*) (EL 143 / 190 [§ 88 R]). Yet Schelling disregards what Hegel says elsewhere about beginning.

In the passage Schelling has in mind Hegel is explaining what is involved in the very concept of “beginning”: when something merely “begins” it is *not yet* (or at least not yet fully) present, though it is in the process of becoming. As we saw on 1: 57-8, however, logic cannot begin with the idea of “beginning” as such. The problem is that the idea of a beginning already contains the thought that it is the beginning *of* something – something that is not yet there. It thus involves both “a first *and* an other”: the beginning comes first, but it is the start of something that will be more than, and other than, the mere beginning itself. To begin with the idea of “beginning”, therefore, is to know from the outset that there is more to come, and so is already to have gone beyond the beginning, *already to have begun*. As Hegel puts it, beginning with the idea of “beginning” “implies that an advance has already been made” (SL 52 / LS 65). The true beginning of logic, in Hegel’s view, must thus be one that does not announce itself to be the *beginning* of anything. Such a beginning must be pure being that does not point to anything beyond itself, to anything that is “not yet” present.

While it is true, therefore, that “the matter is *not yet* in its beginning”, the thought of pure *being*, with which Hegel’s logic begins, contains no thought whatever of any “not yet”. It does not contain the thought that something more is coming to be but *not yet* there; nor does it contain the thought that, in contrast with what is to come, pure being is *still only* pure being. Furthermore, the thought of what is “not yet” the case plays no role in the transition from being to nothing: being proves to be nothing solely by virtue of being pure indeterminate being. Schelling, however, misses this completely and claims that the thought of the “not yet” plays an essential role at the start of Hegel’s logic. In Schelling’s view, “the proposition ‘pure being is nothing’” means nothing other than that “being is here – from the present point of view – *still* [*noch*] nothing”. To say that being is “still nothing”, however, is to say that “it is *not yet* real being” (*es ist noch nicht das wirkliche Sein*) (HMP 140-1 / AS 4: 551). Being is nothing, therefore, only because it is understood to lack what we take *real being* to be.

Note that, in misinterpreting the start of Hegel's logic in this way, Schelling deprives that logic of the immanence that, for Hegel, is its distinctive characteristic: pure being does not vanish into nothing of its own accord, but it proves to be nothing only because we compare it with, and find it not yet to be, "real being". In Hegel's view, speculative logic must develop immanently (if it develops at all) because it is preceded by "total *presuppositionlessness*" (EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R]); on Schelling's reading, however, such logic *presupposes* "real being" from the start, and without that presupposition it would never move on from pure being to any other thought. The compulsion to move on from pure being, Schelling writes, "has its basis only in the fact that thought is already used to a more concrete being, a being more full of content, and thus cannot be satisfied with that meagre diet of pure being in which only content in the abstract but no determinate content is thought". What always "tacitly leads" the progression of categories in Hegel's logic, therefore, is "the *terminus ad quem*, the real world, at which science finally is to arrive" (HMP 138 / AS 4: 547-8). We move on from pure being because with pure being we are *not yet* where we want to end up.

Schelling's critique of Hegel's logic exercised significant influence on other critics of Hegel, such as Feuerbach, Kierkegaard and Engels,¹⁷ but in presenting that critique he seriously distorts what Hegel is claiming. Schelling attributes the following argument to Hegel. Being is pure and indeterminate; but there needs to be more than just *pure* being for there to be *being* at all: there needs to be determinacy, difference and concreteness, or what Schelling calls "real being"; since the latter is absent in pure being, all there is, in our eyes, is *nothing*; pure being is nothing, therefore, because it lacks what is required for it to be *more* than just "pure being". This, however, is not Hegel's argument.

For Hegel himself, in contrast to Schelling's Hegel, being does not need to be *more* than pure being in order to be being at all; pure being is itself *being* in its immediacy. Pure being is thus not already nothing by virtue of lacking that "more", lacking "real being"; even without such real being, pure being is *being*, not just nothing.

Pure being, however, immediately vanishes into nothing because it is *indeterminate*: "only in this pure indeterminacy, and because of it, is being *nothing*" (EL 139 / 186 [§ 87 R]). Yet this indeterminacy must be properly understood. Pure being is not just indeterminate in the way Schelling thinks: it is not just indeterminate through lacking the determinacy or concreteness with which we are familiar from ordinary life, or what Schelling calls "real being". In Hegel's view, pure being is utterly indeterminate *in itself*: it is itself so indeterminate that nothing distinguishes it *as* pure being, and it is thus *not even the pure being it is*. Through its sheer indeterminacy, therefore, pure being disappears before our very eyes: it proves not to be being after all, but to be sheer and utter nothing.

Note that, in Hegel's view, pure being proves to be nothing, not because it lacks the determinacy that would make it *more* than pure being, but because it lacks the minimal "determinacy" that would make it *pure being* at all. Accordingly, the "nothing" that pure being proves to be is not the absence of concreteness, but the utter absence of *being* as such (see WLS 59). More precisely, nothing is, indeed, the absence of concreteness, but only because it is the absence of being as such, not the other way around.¹⁸

To repeat: the key to understanding the opening of Hegel's logic is a simple but subtle idea: pure being is so indeterminate, it is not even the pure *being* it is, and so vanishes into nothing. As Hegel himself puts it: "since being is devoid of all determination [*das Bestimmungslose*], it is not the (affirmative) determinacy that it is; it is not being but nothing" (SL 74 / LS 92). Schelling, one of the most influential critics of Hegel, misses this point and never sees precisely why pure being disappears into nothing.¹⁹

NOTHING AND BEING

Nothing is usually understood as the absence of *something*.²⁰ In speculative logic, however, nothing is understood, not just as the absence of something, but as the absence of being as such. Yet nothing is not to be conceived as the explicit negative of being, or "*non-being*" (*Nichtsein*). As we shall see, nothing will be conceived in this way when we reach the thought of determinate being (*Dasein*). The immediate result of pure being's disappearance, however, is not a negative that continues to stand in relation to being, but a negative from which being is altogether absent. This negative is nothing whatsoever, pure and simple nothing without further determination. As Hegel writes:

the issue first of all is not the form of opposition, which is at the same time the form of *relation*, but the abstract, immediate negation, the nothing purely for itself [*das Nichts rein für sich*], negation devoid of relation – which could also be expressed, if one so wishes, by the mere "*not*" (*Nicht*).

—SL 60 / LS 73²¹

It is important to emphasize that by "nothing", Hegel does not understand an empty form of being: he is not envisaging, for example, empty space, which is there but which lacks any material content. By "nothing" he understands sheer and utter *nothing*, in which there is no trace of being whatsoever. Hegel points out, however, that by virtue of its purity as absolute nothingness, nothing has an *immediacy* to it: it is simply and immediately nothing, and nothing else besides – "the abstract, immediate negation". By virtue of this immediacy, however, pure nothing proves to be utterly indeterminate *being*: for simple immediacy, at this stage in speculative logic, is all that being is understood to be.

“Nothing is therefore the same determination or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same, as pure being” (SL 59 / LS 72).

Nothing is the absolute absence of being: pure nothing with no trace of being at all. Yet in its very purity *as nothing* it is “simple equality with itself”, and so is *immediately* itself. Accordingly, as Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, “*nothing*, as this immediate, self-equal [nothing], is *the same as being*”.²² So, just as pure being, by virtue of its indeterminacy, vanishes into nothing, so pure nothing, by virtue of its immediacy, vanishes into being. Each in its purity *ceases* being itself and “*vanishes in its opposite*” (SL 60 / LS 72). Pure being and pure nothing do not, therefore, reciprocally undermine one another, but each in its purity undermines or “sublates” itself of its own accord (SL 81 / LS 100).

In the paragraph on nothing in the *Logic*, Hegel appears to suggest that nothing proves to be being only because “nothing *is* (exists) in our intuiting or thinking” (SL 59 / LS 72). One should recall, however, that speculative logic does not provide a phenomenological account of what happens to being and nothing when they are thought *by us*. It sets out what being and nothing prove to be logically through themselves. Clearly, the logical “fate” of pure being and pure nothing becomes apparent in and through our thinking of them, since Hegel’s speculative logic is precisely metaphysics-*as-logic*. The development Hegel traces, however, is not a product of our thinking; rather, it is made necessary, logically, by being and nothing themselves and is simply made explicit and articulated by thought. In speculative logic, our thought does not determine the development that the categories of being and thought undergo, but it is itself determined by the immanent logical development of those categories. Nothing thus vanishes into being through its own immediacy, not because it “exists” in *our* thinking.²³

Note, by the way, that once pure nothing proves to be pure indeterminate being, it becomes apparent that we could have begun speculative logic with nothing, rather than being, and still found ourselves caught in the same vanishing of the one into the other. As Hegel writes, that “the beginning should be made with nothing (as in Chinese philosophy) need not cause us to lift a finger, for before we could do so this nothing would no less have converted itself into being” (which would then vanish into nothing and so on) (SL 75 / LS 92-3). It would seem to be a matter of indifference, therefore, whether we start with being or nothing, since starting with the latter would not lead us on a different logical path or initiate an alternative “shadow” logic.²⁴ Yet Hegel insists that the proper place from which to begin presuppositionless logic is in fact pure being, rather than nothing. This is because we enter logic by abstracting from *everything* around us, an “everything” that is “affirmative being” (*Seiendes*), and “the result of abstracting from all that is [*von allem Seienden*], is first of all abstract being, *being* as such [*abstraktes Sein, Sein überhaupt*]” (SL 75 / LS 93). It is with the latter, therefore, that we must begin, even though we would reach the same result if we were to begin with nothing.

THE IMMEDIATE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PURE BEING AND PURE NOTHING

At the start of paragraph 1.1.1.C.1 Hegel writes that “*pure being and pure nothing are therefore the same*”.²⁵ Each proves to be the other, and so there turns out to be no difference between them: “each of them is in the same way the indeterminate” (SL 59, 68 / LS 72, 84). Yet, as noted above (1: 139), Hegel also insists that being and nothing are not the same but are “*absolutely distinct*” (SL 60 / LS 72) It is important to understand the nature of this distinction.

Hegel insists that the difference between pure being and nothing cannot be defined or determined more precisely: it is, as he puts it, “*unsayable*” (*unsagbar*). He challenges his opponents to state clearly how pure being and nothing differ from one another, but he also maintains that this cannot be done because neither has any “determinacy” (*Bestimmtheit*) by which it would be distinguished from the other: both are equally, and utterly, indeterminate. The difference between being and nothing, we are told, thus lies merely “in *intention*” (*im Meinen*) (SL 68 / LS 83-4). There is no clear, determinate difference between the two, but they are nonetheless *meant* to be different.

In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel repeats the claim that the difference between pure being and nothing is “something merely *meant*” (*eine bloße Meinung*) (EL 139 / 186 [§ 87 R]). Yet this claim risks distorting Hegel’s position, for he does not believe that the difference between being and nothing is merely one that *we* draw. He maintains that this difference belongs to being and nothing themselves: they are themselves “*absolutely distinct*”. Pure being does not have any contrast with nothing built into it, but it is pure and simple *being* without further determination. As such, however, it is the utter opposite of nothing: it is pure being with no trace of the negative whatsoever. Similarly, nothing has no contrast with being built into it – and so is not to be understood as “non-being” – but it is sheer and utter *nothing*. As such, however, it is the complete absence of being. (Indeed, “nothing” is just the name we give to the complete absence of being – the absence of being that pure being itself proves to be.) So, “correct as it is to affirm the unity of being and nothing, it is *equally* correct to say that *they are absolutely diverse* [*schlechthin verschieden*] too – that the one is *not* what the other is” (EL 141 / 188 [§ 88 R]).

The difference between pure being and nothing is thus not just one that exists in “intention”, but it is an *immediate* difference that is due to pure being and nothing themselves. Being and nothing are immediately different because each is purely and immediately *itself* and thereby completely excludes the other. Being may not be defined explicitly as “not-nothing”, and nothing may not be defined as “non-being”, but each in being itself *in fact* shuts out the other. As Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, therefore, “being and nothing are the antithesis [*Gegensatz*] in all its *immediacy*, i.e. without any determination already being *posited* in the one that would contain its relation to the other”

(EL 141 / 188 [§ 88 R]). The difference between them is thus not merely there for us, but is an immediate logical and ontological difference: being is pure and simple being, and nothing *by contrast* is utter nothing.

Yet this immediate difference between being and nothing is also unsustainable. Indeed, it disappears the moment it is thought: “the distinction between them *is*, but equally *sublates itself* [*sich aufhebt*] and *is not*” (SL 68 / LS 83). This difference “sublates” or undermines itself because being and nothing vanish into one another and thereby prove to be the same. This vanishing in turn renders explicit the fact that the *immediate* difference between being and nothing is an utterly *indeterminate* one. Being and nothing are immediately different, but for that reason there is no clearly defined, determinate difference between them: their difference is simple and immediate “without any further determination”. In the vanishing of being and nothing into one another the indeterminacy of their difference – its lack of clear definition – manifests itself as sheer *instability*. Being and nothing differ, therefore, in such a way that neither is definitely – and so stably – itself but each vanishes into its opposite.

The opening dialectic of being and nothing thus reveals a contradiction at the heart of purely immediate difference. The immediate difference between being and nothing is a difference without determinacy – without a clear boundary – because being and nothing themselves are indeterminate. As such, however, being and nothing vanish into one another, and the immediate difference between them disappears. That immediate difference thus proves to be a difference that is no difference at all.

Yet the immediate difference between being and nothing is not simply eliminated by their vanishing into one another, but it is preserved – or restored – in its very disappearance. This difference is preserved in the fact that each vanishes into the *other*. Being and nothing prove to be, and so vanish *into*, one another, and in that sense the difference between them disappears: they prove to be the same indeterminacy. Yet they prove to be the same by vanishing into *one another*, and in so doing they remain *other* than one another. Indeed, it is only through remaining immediately different from, and other than, the other, that each *vanishes* in the other: each vanishes by proving to be the *other* in which it is completely absent. Being vanishes by proving to be nothing, in which there is no trace of being at all, and nothing vanishes by proving to be pure being, in which there is no trace of any negative. The immediate difference between being and nothing is thus in fact doubly contradictory: for it is a difference that is not a difference – because being and nothing prove to be the same – but it is also one that, in disappearing, preserves itself. (Note, by the way, that for this reason being and nothing, as they are initially conceived, cannot coexist. Pure being vanishes into nothing that is the sheer *absence* of being, and vice versa.)

Hegel is aware that the opening of his logic violates the understanding’s principle of non-contradiction. The understanding, embodied for example in

Parmenides, clings on to the clear, definitive distinction between being and nothing, and resists the thought that they could ever prove to be the same.²⁶ As Hegel presents it, however, there is nothing mysterious or irrational about the dialectical conversion of being and nothing into one another. That dialectical conversion is logically necessary: being and nothing pass into one another for the reasons we have seen, and the immediate difference between them thereby proves to be, of necessity, an indeterminate, unstable difference.

It is here, I think, right at the start of Hegel's logic that readers new to Hegel will find themselves facing the greatest challenge to their customary assumptions about thought and being. Later categories in the *Logic* will be more complicated and difficult to understand than being and nothing; it is here, however, that the *dialectic* Hegel sees at the heart of being first becomes apparent. Some readers will find that dialectic to be a source of insight and, indeed, inspiration; others will find it to be a source of intense frustration. Those who find Hegel's account of being and nothing frustrating should, however, bear in mind that Hegel is not deliberately flouting the traditional principles of reasoning for its own sake (and is certainly not aiming, as Popper believes, to undermine rational argument).²⁷ He is simply disclosing the dynamism in being that he takes to become evident when one focuses on being in its purity and immediacy *without uncritically assumed preconceptions*. This dynamism may be at odds with the world as the understanding conceives it, but Hegel thinks that it is immanent in being itself. To deny this dynamism, in Hegel's view, is to commit oneself uncritically to the standpoint of Parmenides and others, like Spinoza and Jacobi, who subscribe to what Hegel calls a "system of identity" – a system governed by the principle that "being is only being" and "nothing is only nothing" (SL 61 / LS 74).

Hegel appears to deny that dynamism himself when he writes in paragraph 1.1.1.C.1 that "being – does not pass over [*nicht übergeht*] – but has passed over into nothing, and nothing into being" (SL 59-60 / LS 72). His wording here, however, is not meant to deny that being and nothing vanish into one another before our very eyes. It is meant to indicate the *immediacy* with which each vanishes into its opposite: no sooner is pure being thought than it is gone. Hegel emphasizes the inherently dynamic character of being and nothing in both the *Logic* and *Encyclopaedia Logic*: as he writes in the latter, "being is the passing [*Übergehen*] into nothing and nothing is the passing into being" (EL 144 / 191 [§ 88 R]).²⁸

Note that Hegel states here not just that being and nothing *pass over* into one another, but that each *is* the passing into its opposite. We start from the thought of pure being; pure being then immediately vanishes into nothing; in the process, however, it reveals itself *to be* nothing but that vanishing. It turns out, therefore, that there is, ultimately, no pure being by itself, and there is no pure nothing by itself either, because *each in its very purity proves to be its own*

vanishing. “Their truth is therefore this *movement* of the immediate vanishing [Verschwinden] of the one into the other: *becoming* [Werden]” (SL 60 / LS 72).

BECOMING

“Becoming” is the third category to emerge in Hegel’s logic. It is made necessary by the first two, for both being and nothing prove to be the movement of vanishing into, and so *becoming*, one another. Becoming is thus what being and nothing themselves prove to be in truth. By contrast, being and nothing as such, prior to their becoming one another, are now to be understood in retrospect as “pure abstractions” in their “complete untruth” (SL 61-2 / LS 75-6). This is not to say that pure being and pure nothing should now be dismissed as fictions. After all, it is they that give rise to becoming in the first place: becoming arises because pure being and pure nothing prove to be their own *vanishing*. In this process, however, each shows itself not *just* to be purely itself. In comparison with the vanishing they prove to be, therefore, pure being and pure nothing as such must now be regarded as abstractions or as underdeterminations of their true character.

This, of course, is an understanding we can have only after speculative logic has begun, not at the beginning. At the beginning Hegel focuses – like Parmenides – on pure being itself, without conceiving it explicitly as an “abstraction”. Indeed, as we have seen, he goes further than Parmenides and understands being to be utterly indeterminate. Now, however, he has gone beyond Parmenides altogether and reached the standpoint of Heraclitus, who asserted (in Hegel’s words) that “all *flows*, that is, all is *becoming*” (SL 60 / LS 73); and from this new standpoint the pure being with which we begin is merely an abstraction.

In his book on Hegel’s “idealism”, Robert Pippin insists that at this point in the *Logic* Hegel keeps logical and ontological issues distinct and so does not “*affirm* a Heraclitean vision of a ceaselessly changing reality”.²⁹ In my view, however, that is exactly what Hegel is doing – or, to be more precise, he is affirming a Heraclitean vision of sheer *becoming* (since the determinations of “reality” and “change” do not arise until later in the *Logic*). Furthermore, Hegel shows that we are led to this Heraclitean vision *by* the standpoint of Parmenides itself (refined in the way described above): pure being itself proves to be the becoming that Parmenides declared to be something “unheard of”.³⁰ Hegel’s ontological claim at this point is thus that being is in truth becoming, and his logical claim is that “becoming” is a necessary category of thought, alongside “being” and “nothing”.

Note, though, that becoming is not to be understood here as becoming *in time*. It is merely the transition of pure being and nothing into one another. We certainly need time in order to think that transition, but being does not itself

prove to be temporal at this early stage in Hegel's logic; indeed, being will not prove to be temporal until we reach the end of logic and begin the philosophy of nature. It goes without saying, too, that the *process*, described in logic, in which being proves to be becoming (and then further forms of being) is not temporal, either. It is the logical process in which being discloses what it is in truth. Hegel's claim is thus not that in time there is first being, then nothing and then becoming, but that logically being itself proves to *be* becoming (as it will later prove to be substance, the Idea and space-time).

Since both being *and* nothing prove to be becoming, becoming itself takes two forms. One of those forms – the vanishing of nothing into being – is the process of *coming-to-be* (*Entstehen*), and the other – the vanishing of being into nothing – is the process of *ceasing-to-be* (*Vergehen*) (SL 80 / LS 99). To our everyday ears, the word “becoming” has a positive sound: we think of becoming as the process of coming *into being*. Hegel shows, however, that becoming is in fact both positive and negative: it encompasses the emergence and the disappearance of being.

Furthermore, these two processes are not simply parallel to one another, but one leads directly to, and so itself proves to be, the other. In the process of ceasing-to-be, being passes over into nothing; but, Hegel points out, “nothing is just as much the opposite of itself, the passing-over [*Übergehen*] into being, coming-to-be”. The disappearance of being is thus also the *emergence* of being. Conversely, in the process of coming-to-be, “nothing goes over into being, but being equally sublates itself and is rather the passing-over into nothing; it is ceasing-to-be” (SL 80-1 / LS 100). The two processes of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be thus form one continuous cycle of becoming.

They do so, Hegel notes, because “each sublates itself in itself and is in its own self [*an ihm selbst*] the opposite of itself” (SL 81 / LS 100). In Plato's *Phaedo* Socrates insists that “the opposite itself could never come to be opposite to itself”.³¹ Hegel shows, however, that this is not true of the two opposed forms of becoming (or of being and nothing themselves); on the contrary, these two forms of becoming show themselves to be thoroughly “self-sublating” and dialectical by converting themselves directly *into* their opposites. In this respect, therefore, Hegel's presuppositionless logic poses a direct and profound challenge to one of Plato's most fundamental assumptions (an assumption that is itself indebted to Parmenides and that coincides with the principle of non-contradiction).³²

Note that being and nothing not only prove to be two different, but connected, forms of becoming, but in so doing they also mutate into *moments* of each form of becoming. Being and nothing thus undergo a twofold transformation: they turn into processes of which they are themselves moments. Nothing, we recall, does not just vanish into being, but it proves *to be* that vanishing, the transition into its opposite. It proves, therefore, to be the very process of coming-to-be. In that process, however, “nothing is immediate” and

“passes over” into being; the process that nothing proves to be thus contains nothing and being as its two moments. Equally, being proves to be the very process of ceasing-to-be, but in that process “being is immediate” and “passes over into nothing” and so both being and nothing are its moments. As becoming, therefore, being and nothing are each the process of *vanishing* itself; but, as moments of becoming, they are each *that which* vanishes into the other.

At first, being and nothing are thought in their purity and sheer immediacy. In vanishing into one another and so proving to be becoming, however, they also “sink from their initially represented *self-subsistence* into *moments*”. As such, they “are *still distinguished* but at the same time sublated [*aufgehoben*]”. They are sublated, or negated, because they are *no longer* purely themselves but are now mere moments – vanishing moments – of the processes they constitute (SL 80 / LS 99).³³

THE TRANSITION TO DETERMINATE BEING (*DASEIN*)

Being and nothing vanish immediately into one another: they are utterly unstable. The restless instability or “vanishing” that each proves to be is *becoming*. Becoming, however, does not vanish immediately into any further determination. Becoming is the first “concrete thought” that emerges in speculative logic, and as such it is a relatively stable category that does not disappear the moment it is thought (EL 144 / 192 [§ 88 A]). Yet a further determination becomes evident when we render explicit – or, as Hegel puts it, when we *posit* – what is implicit in becoming.

Hegel claims in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* that “the whole course of philosophising, being methodical, i.e. *necessary*, is nothing else but the mere *positing* [*Setzen*] of what is already contained in a concept” (EL 141 / 188 [§ 88 R]). At the start of logic, therefore, we posit, or render explicit, what pure being is implicitly by disclosing it to be nothing and then becoming, and becoming in turn is “simply the positedness [*Gesetztsein*] of what being is in its truth” (EL 144 / 192 [§ 88 A]). We are thus active at the start insofar as *we* think being as becoming. In another sense, however, we are quite passive at the start, for we are forced – immediately – by the sheer indeterminacy of being to think it as vanishing into nothing, and so as becoming. We have (almost) no choice in the matter: our thinking simply sets out the vanishing that being itself immediately proves to be, the moment it is thought.

The case of becoming is now somewhat different: it does not immediately turn into a further category, but enjoys a certain stability *as* restless instability. Accordingly, we now need to play a more active role in speculative logic than we do at the beginning: for we must now actively *examine* the logical structure of becoming and render explicit what is implicit – though not immediately and

obviously so – in it. In the process, Hegel claims, becoming mutates into *determinate being* (*Dasein*) (translated by di Giovanni as “existence”). This mutation is not, however, artificially engineered by us; it is made necessary logically by what is inherent in becoming itself. Speculative logic thus remains a purely immanent discipline in which our thought is both active and passive (see 1: 75-6).

The reason why becoming must settle into determinate being is as follows. Becoming is the vanishing of pure being and pure nothing into one another. The latter are thus present in becoming “as vanishing” (*als Verschwindende*); that is to say, in becoming, being and nothing *cease* being purely themselves (SL 81 / LS 100). Yet at the same time, as we noted above (1: 145), becoming *preserves* the purity of being and nothing and the pure difference between them. This is because, in becoming, each vanishes into the *other* – an other that is purely itself and utterly distinct from its counterpart. Becoming is thus the vanishing of pure being and nothing in which they do *not* actually vanish, but each re-emerges as quite distinct from the other; or, as Hegel puts it, “becoming as such is only through their being distinguished [*durch die Unterschiedenheit derselben*]” (SL 81 / LS 100).³⁴

In Hegel’s understanding, therefore, becoming is not in fact what it is: though it is simply the vanishing of pure being and nothing, it is not actually such vanishing because of the very way in which being and nothing vanish in it. When, however, we render explicit what is implicit in this “vanishing”, a subtle transformation of becoming occurs: for when becoming is thought explicitly, and so taken seriously, *as* the vanishing of pure being and nothing, the latter must vanish in such a way that they actually *vanish* and do not re-emerge as purely themselves. This means, however, that they can no longer simply vanish *into one another* (since in that case they re-emerge and so do not actually vanish). So how is their vanishing now to be understood? In such a way that they cease altogether being purely themselves; that is, their vanishing must result in their purity having completely *vanished*. Becoming is “the vanishing of being into nothing, and of nothing into being” and so is “the vanishing of being and nothing as such [*überhaupt*]”. If this vanishing is to be taken seriously, and to be the *vanishing* it is, it must issue in the actual “vanishedness” (or “having vanished”) (*Verschwundensein*) of pure being and pure nothing (SL 81 / LS 100).

This “vanishedness” cannot itself just be nothing, nor can it be pure being: for if pure being and pure nothing are *both* truly to vanish, neither can be simply eliminated in favour of the other. If either were to disappear altogether, the other would be left in its purity and *so would not vanish*; both are to vanish, however, so neither can disappear completely. The result of their vanishing, therefore, must be one in which being and nothing are both *preserved*, but in which neither is *purely* itself any longer. What must disappear, if pure being and pure nothing are truly to vanish, is thus their *purity* and pure difference from

one another: for only when their purity is eliminated, do they both vanish *without re-emerging*. Since neither being nor nothing is purely itself in such a result, each must be inseparable from the other. What results from the vanishing of pure being and pure nothing is thus necessarily the *unity* or *inseparability* of being and nothing.

Since being and nothing are no longer purely themselves in this unity, they no longer continue to vanish into one another, and so all becoming comes to an end. Thus, when becoming is thought explicitly as *itself* – as the thorough vanishing of pure being and pure nothing – it settles into “the unity of being and nothing that has become calm [*ruhig*] simplicity”. Accordingly, becoming, as Hegel understands it, is “an ceaseless unrest that collapses into a calm result”. This stable unity of being and nothing, in which neither is purely itself any longer, Hegel calls “*Dasein*”, translated by Miller as “determinate being” (SL 81 / LS 100-1).

The transition from becoming to determinate being can be hard to grasp at first reading. There is, however, nothing mysterious about the transition: becoming comes to a halt through its own inherent logic and so undermines itself. The reason, once again, is this: becoming is “the vanishing of being and nothing as such”; yet “becoming as such is only through their being distinguished”, that is to say, becoming occurs only because each vanishes into the *other*, which in that respect does not vanish; becoming is thus the vanishing of pure being and nothing that is not actually their vanishing. If, therefore, this vanishing is to be taken seriously, and pure being and pure nothing are truly to vanish, then one can no longer vanish into the *other*, but *both* must vanish together. If, however, neither can vanish utterly, leaving only the other, then both must actually be preserved; but equally, if pure being and pure nothing must both vanish, then both must lose their *purity* in the process. The vanishing of pure being and nothing is taken seriously, therefore, only when being and nothing are both preserved *without their purity*.³⁵ Yet this purity (and with it the pure difference between being and nothing) is what generates the vanishing in the first place and sustains it; with the loss of that purity, therefore, all vanishing ceases. The vanishing of being and nothing thus proves to be “the vanishing of becoming, or the vanishing of the vanishing itself [*Verschwinden des Verschwindens selbst*]”, and becoming necessarily “collapses into a calm result” (SL 81 / LS 100).

The key to following this argument is understanding precisely what it means to take the vanishing of pure being and nothing seriously, to render explicit what is implicit in the idea of such vanishing. To do so, according to Hegel, is to recognize that pure being and nothing cannot merely vanish *into one another* – for, in that way, they do not actually vanish – but must vanish *into their both having vanished*. This result will be neither pure nothing, nor pure being, but the unity or inseparability of being and nothing, in which their *purity* and pure difference have been eliminated.³⁶

Note, by the way, that Hegel's account of the self-undermining of becoming does not presuppose the unity of being and nothing: Hegel does not subordinate becoming to a unity to which he is already committed in advance. On the contrary, that unity results from the self-undermining of becoming: it is produced *by* becoming's internal collapse. What drives becoming to settle into the unity of determinate being is the loss of the purity of being and nothing.

At the risk of trying the reader's patience, here once again is Hegel's argument. Becoming arises in speculative logic as pure being and pure nothing vanish into one another. It is the movement, therefore, in which the purity of both is lost and each shows itself to be the transition into its opposite. Yet becoming also preserves the purity of being and nothing, because each vanishes into its sheer other. Hegel then renders explicit what it means for becoming to be the genuine *loss* of pure being and pure nothing. As he does so, becoming itself comes to a halt, because it can no longer be the vanishing of each *into its pure other*, but must be the vanishing of both into their unity in which neither is purely itself. That unity cannot itself be the source of further becoming, because there is now no longer any purity to generate it by vanishing. We move forward from becoming to determinate being, therefore, not because we prefer stability over instability, but because we take seriously the *loss of purity* that is only inadequately embodied in becoming.

In this light we can see that the pure being from which speculative logic begins does not constitute the firm foundation of all further categories. On the contrary, those further categories emerge only because pure being undermines itself – *impurifies* itself – more and more consistently. The move from becoming to determinate being thus represents, not a restoration of pure being, but a more thorough undermining of it. Pure being mutates into determinate being, and so determines itself, only by losing its purity more profoundly than it does in becoming. The problem with “Heraclitean” becoming, from Hegel's point of view, is thus not that it denies the purity of “Parmenidean” being, but that it clings to it all too firmly. Such becoming, for Hegel, undermines “Parmenidean” being in one respect, in that it is precisely *becoming*, not pure and simple *being*. Yet becoming feeds off such being, because it entails the loss and *re-emergence* of pure being. Logically, therefore, if not historically, the standpoints of Heraclitus and Parmenides are more closely aligned than appears to be the case at first sight. Both fail to see that, logically, pure being must convert itself into *determinate being*, in which there is no longer any purity – of being or nothing – at all.³⁷

SUBLATION (AUFHEBUNG)

The transition from becoming to determinate being provides the first fully developed example of sublation (*Aufhebung*) in the *Logic* – “a fundamental determination”, Hegel tells us, “that repeatedly occurs everywhere” in

philosophy (SL 81 / LS 101). Sublation fuses two processes into one. On the one hand, it involves negating something; on the other hand, it also involves preserving that thing. As Hegel explains, sublation is the process of negating the simple *immediacy* – or purity – of something, but without eliminating that something altogether: “that which is sublated is thus something at the same time preserved, something that has lost only its immediacy but is not on that account annihilated [*vernichtet*]” (SL 82 / LS 101). Since what is sublated is no longer purely and immediately itself, it must be thought together with its negation. Accordingly, Hegel writes, “something is sublated only in so far as it has entered into unity with its opposite”. Being and nothing are both sublated in becoming, insofar as each is present only as vanishing *into* the other. Yet their sublation is only partial, since each vanishes into its *pure other*, and their immediacy, or purity, is thus not thoroughly negated. In determinate being, however, that immediacy is thoroughly negated and each is present only as united with its opposite.

Three things should be noted about sublation, as Hegel understands it. First, it is not an operation performed by us on concepts or determinations of being. It occurs when we render explicit what a category is implicitly, but it is made necessary by the category itself. Categories are thus not sublated *by us*, but “each sublates itself in itself” (SL 81 / LS 100).

Second, sublation does not presuppose a unity into which categories are sublated or sublate themselves, but it is the process through which such a unity emerges. Unity is thus the product, not the precondition, of sublation. Categories form a unity because they undermine their own immediacy and purity. They sublate themselves into a unity, therefore, of their own accord, not because speculative thought is oriented in advance towards unity and reconciliation. Speculative thought, for Hegel, is presuppositionless thought. This means that it presupposes no determinate conception of being or rules of thought, but also that it presupposes no prior orientation towards unity or the “unity of differences”.

Jacques Derrida, however, is one of many post-Hegelian thinkers who believe that Hegel’s thought is governed by precisely such an orientation. Derrida acknowledges that Hegel has a keen understanding of the importance of the negative in philosophy and in life. Yet he asserts that Hegel always thinks the negative *within* a certain pre-established order. This order is one in which everything negative, every loss, is reappropriated and put to work “in the service of meaning”, that is, in the service of spirit’s return to *unity* with itself.³⁸ Hegelian sublation, for Derrida, is the operation through which the negative is appropriated and “raised” (*relevé*) into a higher unity; as he writes in *Glas*, “the *Aufhebung*” is “the economic law of absolute reappropriation of the absolute loss”.³⁹ Derrida remains blind, therefore, to the true character of sublation, as Hegel conceives it. He fails to see that it is not an operation oriented in advance

to unity, but the process whereby categories and forms of being undermine themselves – lose themselves – of their own accord, and thereby generate new, *unanticipated* unities. In other words, Derrida fails to see that speculative logic does not have a path already marked out for it by sublation and its “order of reappropriation”, but that such logic “makes its own way” as the categories it considers sublate – undo and lose – themselves.⁴⁰

The third thing to note about sublation is that categories change their logical structure as they sublate themselves. As being and nothing are (partially) sublated in becoming, they do not simply remain themselves but mutate into the processes of ceasing-to-be and coming-to-be, and into moments of each process, though in so doing, as we have seen, they also retain their purity. In determinate being, being and nothing are then no longer pure being and nothing at all, but form an inseparable unity with one another that divides itself into “reality” and “negation” (see SL 85 / LS 105). The process of sublation is thus one in which categories lose their immediacy, form a unity with their opposites and thereby transform themselves logically into *new* categories. Once again, then, sublation is the process whereby something unforeseen emerges, not one that simply subordinates the negative in its various forms to a pre-determined logical order.

SCHELLING AND HEGELIAN BECOMING

Before we move on to consider determinate being itself, I shall comment briefly on Schelling’s interpretation of Hegel’s account of becoming. As we saw above, Schelling does not think that pure being, as Hegel conceives it, proves to be nothing due to its sheer indeterminacy. He thinks that it proves to be nothing, only because it is abstract, and so is “*still* nothing” (noch *das Nichts*), compared to “*real* being” (*das wirkliche Sein*). Pure being is nothing, therefore, only because “it is not yet [*noch nicht*] real being” (HMP 141 / AS 4: 551). Schelling draws on this latter idea to explain how Hegel derives the category of becoming. His explanation proceeds as follows.

The idea that pure being is “not yet real being” renders pure being *determinate* (*bestimmt*). It is determinate, because it is no longer just “being in general”, but being that stands in relation to, and indeed contains the potential for, real being: as Schelling puts it, it is “being *in potentia*”. In Schelling’s view, that potential *for* real being is inherent in the very idea that pure being is *not yet* real being. Insofar as it contains this potential, however, pure being points forward to a “future being” (*ein künftiges*) that has yet to be but is *to come*, indeed is “already promised” and in that sense is already on the way. Thus, Schelling claims, “with the help of this *yet* Hegel gets to *becoming*” (HMP 141 / AS 4: 551).

Schelling is regarded by some today as one of the most trenchant critics of Hegel.⁴¹ It should be evident to readers, however, that his interpretation of the

opening of Hegel's *Logic* is woefully inadequate. First, whereas Hegel proceeds from being to nothing to becoming and then to determinate being, Schelling's Hegel proceeds from being to nothing to *determinate being* and only then to becoming. Schelling's interpretation of Hegel's derivation of becoming is thus hard, indeed impossible, to square with Hegel's text (of the *Logic* or *Encyclopaedia Logic*).⁴² Second, Schelling sees no connection at all between becoming and the *vanishing* of being and nothing into one another, even though the idea of "vanishing" plays a central role in Hegel's account. Third, by failing to consider how "the vanishing of the vanishing" leads becoming to "collapse" into the unity that is determinate being, Schelling fails to *derive* determinate being logically from becoming (and thus from pure being and nothing) and so makes it difficult, if not impossible, to give a satisfactory account of its logical structure.

Fourth, as I noted above (1: 141), Schelling's account of Hegel's logic deprives it of its *immanence*. It does so by eliminating the thoughts that being and nothing mutate into becoming, and becoming mutates into determinate being, *of their own accord* by undermining themselves logically. For Schelling, the tail that wags the dog of Hegel's logic is the idea of "real being" or the "real world"; this idea, Schelling claims, is presupposed by Hegel throughout his logic as the "*terminus ad quem* [. . .] at which science finally is to arrive" (HMP 138 / AS 4: 548). Speculative logic is moved forward, therefore, not by the immanent self-undoing, or "self-sublation", of categories, but by the presupposed thought of "real being", plus the thought that anything less than this is "*not yet* real being" but points towards to it. This interpretation, however, seriously distorts what is actually going on in such logic and, in my view, betrays a profound misunderstanding of Hegel on Schelling's part.

Schelling's reading of Hegel's logic – to my eyes, at least – is clearly inadequate.⁴³ Examining it is instructive, however, not just because Schelling influenced many critics of Hegel after him, but also because such an examination brings into sharper focus the distinctively immanent character of Hegel's logic.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Determinate Being (*Dasein*)

Most philosophers take it for granted that being, or the “world”, is determinate, that it is *this* rather than *that*. Indeed, most presuppose from the outset that it is *something*. Hegel does not do this, but starts from pure being that is neither determinate, nor “something”. Such being, however, immediately proves to be becoming, and becoming then settles logically into determinate being. Hegel does not simply presuppose that being is determinate, therefore, but he derives being’s determinacy from its initial indeterminacy. That is to say, he shows how pure indeterminate being renders itself determinate of its own accord.

The term “determinate being” is Miller’s translation of the German “*Dasein*”. Translated more literally, the latter means “being that is *there* [*da*]”: if you enter a house and want to know if anyone is there, you ask “ist jemand da?”. In the Hackett edition of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, therefore, Geraets, Suchting and Harris translate *Dasein* as “being-there” (EL 145 [§ 89]). As Hegel notes, however, the spatial connotation contained in *Dasein* – the idea of being *there* – “does not belong here”, since being does not prove to be spatial until the beginning of the philosophy of nature (SL 84 / LS 103). What is indicated by the prefix “da” is nothing more than the element of definiteness or determinacy that distinguishes *Dasein* from pure, indeterminate *Sein*. Accordingly, I think that Miller’s translation of *Dasein* as “determinate being”, though clumsy, is more appropriate than the Hackett translation. In what follows, therefore, I follow Miller or just leave *Dasein* untranslated.¹

DASEIN AS SUCH

Determinate being, as it has emerged at this point in speculative logic, is not the familiar rich world of experience. Indeed, readers will be forgiven for thinking

that not much by way of determinacy has actually emerged: determinate being remains a very abstract category. Hegel's aim here, however, is not to show us everything that being determinate involves (for example, in nature), but to set out the very least, logically, that it can be. The least it can be is what is made necessary by the dialectic of being and becoming.²

Becoming is the vanishing of being and nothing into one another. *Dasein*, by contrast, is "the simple oneness [*Einssein*] of being and nothing" into which becoming settles (SL 83 / LS 103). Note that an immediate difference between being and nothing is preserved in this oneness: *Dasein* is the unity of *two* different moments. Yet the *purely* immediate difference between them (which we considered in the last chapter) has now disappeared, for neither is purely itself any longer. In *Dasein* the two different moments of being and nothing are thus inseparable from one another, and the immediate difference between them is a *moment* in their inseparability.³

In the second paragraph of 1.1.2.A.a Hegel states that being in *Dasein* is united not just with "nothing" (*Nichts*), but with "non-being" (or "not-being") (*Nichtsein*). *Dasein*, as Hegel puts it, is "*being* with a *non-being*, so that this non-being is taken up into simple unity with being" (SL 84 / LS 103). Why does the negative term change in this way, as we move from becoming to *Dasein*? The reason is to be found in the point made above. In *Dasein* being is united with a nothing that is also different from it. Insofar as nothing is different from being, however, it is itself inseparable from being. It is thus no longer just nothing, but nothing or the "not" (*Nicht*) that is explicitly connected to, and one with, being. The explicit unity of the not and being is expressed in the thought of *not-being* or *non-being*. Earlier in the *Logic* Hegel insists that nothing should initially be thought as pure nothing, or the mere not, by itself, and so as "devoid of relation" to being (SL 60 / LS 73). Now, however, the not is inseparable from being: it is the not, or "non", as a form of being. The negative moment with which being is united in *Dasein* is thus no longer nothing, but non-being.

In *Dasein*, therefore, being is united with a negative that is in turn inseparable from being: *Dasein* is *being* that is one with *non-being*. We do not know what else, if anything, such being will prove to be; but we know that being must at least be this.

Note that, so defined, *Dasein* has a very simple logical structure: it is just being with the addition of non-being. Without the moment of non-being, being would be pure, *indeterminate* being: *Sein*. With that moment of non-being, however, being is converted into *determinate* being: *Dasein*. As Hegel points out, it is thus the moment of "non-being" (*Nichtsein*) that "constitutes *determinacy* [*Bestimmtheit*] as such" (SL 84 / LS 103). Being is determinate, therefore, only because it is this-*not*-that. Later in the doctrine of being, we will encounter a category called "determination" (*Bestimmung*) with a more complex logical structure than we see here (see SL 95 / LS 119, and 1: 192-3).

It is important not to confuse *Bestimmung* with *Bestimmtheit*; the latter is nothing more nor less than non-being.

Hegel goes on to examine the ideas of *Dasein* and determinacy more closely and, in the process, derives the further categories of quality, reality and negation. Before he does so, however, he inserts into his text an important discussion of the two different perspectives we can adopt towards categories. As he explains in the third paragraph of 1.1.2.A.a, we can consider what a category is “for us, in our reflection” or what is explicitly “posited” in it (SL 84 / LS 104). “The two”, he writes, “are always to be clearly distinguished”. Hegel is prompted to highlight this distinction by a comment that he makes two paragraphs earlier.

In the first paragraph of 1.1.2.A.a Hegel notes that, although *Dasein* is the unity of being and non-being, the moment of being is initially to the fore. Why should this be? The reason is this. Becoming ceases as it settles into *Dasein*; once the latter has arisen, therefore, becoming has disappeared. Consequently, *Dasein* does not stand in explicit relation to becoming; it stands there alone as an “immediate”, as simply itself. By virtue of that immediacy, however, it is “in the one-sided determination of being” (SL 83 / LS 103): it simply is what it is. *Dasein* is “one-sided”, as Hegel puts it, because it is *being* – being that is determinate – but the equally important moment of non-being is not equally prominent in it.

In the third paragraph of 1.1.2.A.a, however, Hegel explains that *Dasein* is not explicitly one-sided in itself. As we are about to see, *Dasein* will divide itself logically into two forms, one of which is affirmative and one negative, and each of these will be explicitly one-sided since it will stand *over against* its counterpart. To begin with, however, *Dasein* is not explicitly one-sided in this way. It is purely and simply itself: *Dasein* in its immediacy. *Dasein* is one-sided, therefore, only to our eyes, because *we* do not see as much non-being in it as being. As Hegel writes, the idea “that the whole, the unity of being and nothing, is in the one-sided determinacy of being is an external reflection” (SL 84 / LS 104) – a reflection made by us.

Hegel acknowledges that external reflections have their proper place in speculative logic. “Such reflections”, he remarks, “may serve to facilitate a general overview and thus facilitate understanding”. Yet, he points out, since they are made from an external perspective, they are not grounded in the logical development of the categories themselves and so “bring the disadvantage of looking like unjustified assertions”. They cannot, therefore, form the basis for the further logical development of a category. What causes a category to mutate logically into another category is only what *it* is explicitly, not what *we* may judge it to be; or, as Hegel himself puts it, “only that which is *posited* [*gesetzt*] in a concept belongs in the developing consideration of the latter, to its content” (SL 84 / LS 104). The fact that we judge *Dasein* to be one-sided at the outset provides no basis, therefore, for moving on to a further category.

Whatever further categories arise must emerge from, and so be implicit in, what *Dasein* is explicitly itself (see 1: 77).

Hegel's comments highlight the fact that different passages in the *Logic* (and in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*) serve different functions. Some passages present the insights of external reflection, including anticipatory remarks and explanatory comments such as we have just been considering. Other passages, however, set out the explicit logical structure of a category and the logic inherent in that structure that takes us forward to another category. Hegel makes it clear that his texts on logic contain both kinds of passage. Unfortunately, however, he does not always signal clearly when one kind of passage gives way to the other. Readers thus need to be on the alert themselves for the passages that carry the logic forward.

QUALITY

Hegel now explains that *Dasein* itself gives rise to further determinations. What generates these determinations is the lingering difference between being and non-being in *Dasein*.

As we know, *Dasein* is the *unity* of being and non-being. This unity is such that the two moments of being and non-being are completely *one* with one another: they coincide completely. Where there is being, therefore, there is non-being, and where there is non-being, there is being. In Hegel's own words, "so far as determinate being is in the form of being [*seiend ist*], so far is it non-being, so far is it determinate". Indeed, Hegel insists, non-being, or determinacy, will never again "detach itself" from being in speculative logic, "since the underlying truth from now on is the unity of non-being with being" (SL 84-5 / LS 105).⁴ Henceforth, therefore, being will never be anything less than determinate (though some forms of being will be more explicitly determinate than others).

Yet although being and non-being coincide completely in *Dasein*, there is nonetheless a difference between them: *Dasein* is the unity and coincidence of *two* different determinations. This means that that unity itself must take two forms: for it must be the unity of *being* with non-being *and also* the unity of *non-being* with being. Note that these are not two separate unities; they are the same unity in two different forms, or with two different accents. The first is *Dasein* as such. But what of the second? How is that to be understood?

Non-being by itself is "determinacy" (*Bestimmtheit*). In the second form of unity, however, we have not just simple non-being, but non-being, or determinacy, that is one with being. As Hegel puts it, we have determinacy "in the form of *being*" (*als seiende*). The name that Hegel gives to such determinacy is *quality* (*Qualität*) (SL 85 / LS 105). Quality is thus not just determinacy alone. It is determinacy that has affirmative being: determinacy or non-being that *is*.

Note the subtle logical difference between quality and *Dasein* as such: the latter is being that is one with non-being, whereas quality is non-being that is one with being. This may seem an overly fine distinction, but there is no doubt that Hegel draws it: as he writes, “in determinate being [*Dasein*] (a) *as such*, its determinacy is first (b) to be distinguished [*zu unterscheiden*] as *quality*” (SL 83 / LS 103).⁵ Furthermore, Hegel thinks that this distinction is made necessary by the logical structure of *Dasein* itself. *Dasein* must differentiate itself into *Dasein* as such and quality, because it is the unity of two different moments – being and non-being – *each of which* is one with the other.

Yet *Dasein* is also the complete coincidence of being and non-being. *Dasein* as such – being that is one with non-being – thus coincides completely with quality – non-being that is one with being; there is no sharp difference between them. *Dasein*, therefore, is not to be thought of as the “subject” that “has” qualities but is distinct from them; on the contrary, *Dasein* is one with – indeed, identical to – quality itself: as Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, “*quality* is, in general, the determinacy that is immediate, identical with being” (EL 146 / 195 [§ 90 A]). Being is determinate, therefore, insofar as it is qualitative; or, to put it another way, quality is what makes being determinate.

It is tempting, when reading Hegel’s account of *Dasein*, to assume that quality is the quality of *something*, since that is how we usually understand it. Yet part of what makes this account challenging to the newcomer is the fact that quality is conceived here *without* any “something” to which it would belong. This is an unavoidable consequence of the way in which speculative logic proceeds. Logic, as Hegel conceives it, starts with indeterminate being and then shows (via the thoughts of nothing and becoming) that such being proves to be determinate being and quality; no further categories are derived at this point, so we have no warrant for understanding quality in turn to be the quality of *something*. This undoubtedly renders quality more abstract than we are used to. Nonetheless, despite its abstractness, Hegel’s account of quality and determinate being is clear and precise. With careful attention, therefore, it is not hard to understand.

REALITY AND NEGATION

We will now consider what further determinations are inherent in quality itself. At first it appears that there will be none: for Hegel states that, “on account of this simplicity, there is nothing further to say about quality as such” (SL 85 / LS 105). He then points out, however, that quality, as it has been conceived so far, is one-sided, and, as we now see, this leads to the emergence of further determinations.

We saw earlier that *Dasein* is judged to be one-sided at the outset because it is present in its *immediacy* and so is “in the one-sided determination of *being*”

(SL 83 / LS 103). Yet precisely because it is present in its immediacy, and simply *is* what it *is*, *Dasein* is not explicitly one-sided in itself; it is one-sided only *for us*, for external reflection. Quality, by contrast, is not just one-sided for us; Hegel claims that “determinate being [. . .], in which nothing and being are equally contained, is itself the criterion [*Maßstab*] for the one-sidedness of quality as a determinacy that is only *immediate* or in the form of *being*” (SL 85 / LS 105). Why does Hegel make this claim here but not earlier? Why is the case of quality different from that of *Dasein* at the outset? The reason, I think, is this.

Due to its simplicity and immediacy, *Dasein* is initially a further form of *being*: it is determinate *being*, or *being* that is one with non-being. The moment of non-being is certainly contained in *Dasein*, but it is not yet as prominent as being is. Quality, by contrast, is a further form of determinacy or *non-being*. The moment of non-being is thus explicitly to the fore in quality in a way it is not in *Dasein* by itself. Yet quality is determinacy, or non-being, “in the form of *being*” (*als seiende*) (SL 85 / LS 105). There is thus an explicit tension in it that is absent from *Dasein* as it is first conceived: quality is *non-being*, but in the form of *being* rather than non-being itself. As such, quality is non-being that fails to do justice to its own negative character. Accordingly, the judgement that it is “one-sided” is not merely an external reflection, but is grounded in its explicit logical structure. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is not just *Dasein* in general, but *quality* itself, that contains the criterion for the one-sidedness of quality.

Hegel now derives further determinations from quality as follows. Quality, as it has been understood so far, is “determinacy that is only *immediate* or in the form of *being*” (SL 85 / LS 105). This, however, obscures the fact that quality, as *determinacy*, is *non-being*. As simple quality, therefore, quality is not fully and explicitly the non-being that it is, just as becoming *qua* becoming is not properly the vanishing that it is. Quality, Hegel writes, is thus “equally to be posited in the determination of nothing”, and so is to be understood, not just as non-being in the form of *being*, but also as *non-being* in the form of being. At this point, quality becomes fully and explicitly *negative*, or what Hegel calls “negation” (*Negation*). Note that the category of negation arises at this point in the *Logic* because thought simply renders explicit what is implicit in quality itself. The derivation of negation is thus wholly immanent in Hegel’s distinctive sense.

Hegel points out that, in becoming negative, quality differentiates itself from simple, immediate quality, that is, from determinacy “in the form of *being*”. Such affirmative quality is thereby differentiated in turn from negative quality. It ceases, therefore, being simple quality and is converted into immediate, affirmative quality *in contrast* to negative quality. The name that Hegel gives to such explicitly one-sided affirmative quality is “reality” (*Realität*) (SL 85 / LS 105).

Note that the difference between reality and negation is introduced into quality by the fact that the latter must be explicitly *negative*: for, as negative, quality sets itself *over against* its initial affirmative form. Affirmative quality comes to differ from negative quality only indirectly, therefore, thanks to the fact that negative quality differentiates itself from it. This is what Hegel has in mind when he writes that determinacy that is “immediate or in the form of *being*” is “posited as a differentiated, reflected determinacy”. Affirmative quality by itself is simple, immediate quality; it is posited *by* negative quality, however, *as* distinct from the latter and so *as* “reality”.⁶

Reality and negation, by the way, are not just different *moments* of quality. Logically, the moments of quality are “non-being” (or “determinacy”) and “being”, for quality is simply non-being that is one with being. Reality and negation, however, are both equally non-being in the form of being, and so are both equally *quality*. The difference between them, Hegel maintains, is thus a matter of stress or “accent” (*Akzent*). Reality is “quality with the accent on *being*”, whereas negation is quality with the accent on non-being (SL 85 / LS 105). Reality and negation are, therefore, the two different forms that quality *itself* must take: quality, as it is understood in speculative logic, must be both real and negative.

For many philosophers, all qualities are real ones and a negation is simply the absence of a quality. For Hegel, however, negation is “likewise [*gleichfalls*] a quality”: it is the quality of *not* being such and such (SL 85 / 105).⁷ Negation counts as a quality because it is made necessary by and so belongs to determinate being. Determinate being contains non-being and is thus identical with quality; quality in turn, *as* non-being in the form of being, cannot just be affirmative but must also be negative; it must, therefore, take the twin forms of reality *and* negation. One might think that determinate being is simply *being*, simply affirmative; in Hegel’s view, however, negation belongs to being determinate and qualitative just as much as real, affirmative quality does.

Hegel’s account of quality and negation does not, however, open the door to the idea that everything has an infinite number of qualities, each of which consists in *not* being another thing. It does not, therefore, risk setting everything in what Pippin calls “a spuriously infinite relation with all other things”.⁸ It cannot do so for the simple reason that being has not yet shown itself to comprise any “things” in relation to other “things”, let alone an “infinity” of them. All Hegel has demonstrated so far is the general proposition that quality is both negative and affirmative, and that, accordingly, negation belongs to determinate being as much as reality does. We must wait and see what else, if anything, follows from this proposition.⁹

The logic of *Dasein* and quality does not allow us immediately to predict what further determinations might arise in speculative logic. It does, however, let us look back at pure being and understand it in a new way. Pure being as

such is so utterly indeterminate that it lacks all determinacy and quality. Indeed, it is not even to be defined as “in-determinacy”, for that would make it determinately different from determinate being. From the perspective we have now reached, however, we can retrospectively understand pure being, in contrast to determinate being, to have the *quality* of indeterminacy (SL 58 / LS 71). Yet we should bear in mind the limitation of this new understanding. It sheds no new light on pure being itself, or its vanishing into nothing; but it is merely a retrospective “reflection” that enables us to compare quality proper with the “quality” of the pure being that precedes it (see 1: 56).¹⁰

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Readers will note that the logical development of *Dasein* into the qualities of reality and negation is different from the preceding development of being, through becoming, into *Dasein*. There is no vanishing in *Dasein* – all becoming has come to an end – but Hegel proceeds by simply rendering explicit, and thereby doing justice to, the different aspects of *Dasein* in accordance with speculative method. If one bears this in mind, Hegel’s account of *Dasein* is relatively easy to follow.

We start with *Dasein* as the “simple oneness of being and nothing”. In *Dasein*, therefore, being is inseparable from nothing. Yet nothing is also different from being. As such, however, it is in turn inseparable from being – is a form of being – and so is “non-being”. *Dasein* is thus the “simple oneness”, not just of being and *nothing*, but of being and *non-being*; or, as Hegel puts it, it is “*being with a non-being*”. The moment of “non-being”, taken by itself, constitutes “*determinacy*” (*Bestimmtheit*). *Dasein* is thus “*determinate being*” (*bestimmtes Sein*) (SL 83-4 / LS 102-3).

Now being and non-being (or determinacy) coincide completely in *Dasein*; yet these two moments also continue to differ from one another. *Dasein* is thus not only being with a non-being, but also non-being (or determinacy) in the form of being. The latter Hegel calls “quality”. Since quality, however, is at first non-being in the form of *being*, it is not sharply different from *being* that is determinate, or *Dasein*. Rather, *Dasein* coincides with quality and is itself qualitative being. The determinate character of something – what makes it this, rather than that – is thus its *quality* (though recall that we do not yet have any “something”).

Dasein and quality, however, do not just coincide, but there is also a subtle difference between them. Logically, *Dasein* is a further form of being, namely being that is determinate. Quality, by contrast, is a further form of non-being: non-being that is itself being. Yet, as such, quality is one-sided: for it is not explicitly the *non-being* that it is. It must, therefore, be “posited in the determination of nothing” (SL 85 / LS 105), and when that happens quality

becomes negative quality or *negation*. At this point, *Dasein* itself takes its most explicitly negative form. It has been the unity of being and the negative from the start, but only now has the negative come fully into its own and achieved equal prominence with being. *Dasein* is first “*being* with a non-being” and then “non-being in the form of *being*” (or simple, immediate quality). Only with the emergence of negation, however, does quality – and through it *Dasein* itself – become “*non-being* in the form of being” (with the accent on the negative). Note that, as this happens, the negative does not come to overshadow being, but it achieves equal prominence with the latter, because negation necessarily has a counterpart in *reality* (which is simple, immediate quality in explicit contrast to negation). *Dasein* thus proves to be quality that is both real and negative, and that cannot be one without the other. It reaches this point by displaying more and more explicitly the negative moment it contains from the start. In the process, the dominance of being in *Dasein*, which stems from the latter’s initial immediacy, is gradually eroded, and *Dasein* becomes the genuine unity of being *and* non-being.

We have now almost reached the end of Hegel’s account of *Dasein*. Before we move on, however, two further points need to be made. First, Hegel is often thought to be interested only in totalities and grand sweeping movements, but this is a deeply misleading caricature. In fact, as Nietzsche said of Wagner, Hegel is a great “*miniaturist*”:¹¹ he is interested in fine – and significant – distinctions between concepts that often get confused with one another, and we, too, need to pay close attention to these distinctions if we are to follow his logic. This is as true in Hegel’s account of *Dasein* as in any other part of his logic. We thus need to distinguish carefully here between the following concepts.

First, determinacy (*Bestimmtheit*) is simple non-being (*Nichtsein*). Second, quality is more than this: determinacy, or non-being, “in the form of *being*”. Third, negation (*Negation*) is then negative quality, or *non-being* in the form of being: it is quality with the accent on the “non-”. Fourth, this “non-” in turn is the “negative” (*Verneinung*).

These concepts, for Hegel, are all different from one another and should not be confused; yet both Miller and di Giovanni translate “*Verneinung*” as “negation”, when it first appears in 1.1.2.A.b.¹² The *negative*, however, is not the same as *negation*, but is merely a moment of it; negation is thus, as Hegel puts it, quality that is “burdened *with* a negative” (*mit einer Verneinung behaftet*) (SL 85 / LS 105, emphasis added). Similarly, the negative differs from determinacy or non-being taken by itself. It is, in Hegel’s words, the “determinate element of a determinacy” (*das Bestimmte einer Bestimmtheit*); that is to say, the negative is not non-being itself, but the “non-” *in* non-being. Finally, the negative differs from pure nothing. Nothing, Hegel explains, can also be understood as the mere “not” (*Nicht*) (SL 60 / LS 73); the negative, by contrast, is not the not by itself, but the not- or non- that is a moment of non-being and

of negative quality. These distinctions between nothing, non-being, negation and the negative are certainly fine, but they are easy to understand when they are made clear. If they are not made clear, however, Hegel's text can be a source of considerable confusion.

The second point to note is that, in his *Logic*, Hegel is particularly interested in *different kinds of difference*. This is apparent even in the opening chapters of the *Logic*. The difference between being and nothing is a purely immediate difference between categories that immediately vanish into one another. It is thus an utterly unstable difference. The difference between *Dasein* and quality, however, is different from this, since *Dasein* and quality do not vanish into, or become, one another. Yet this difference is not a sharp one, for, as we have seen, *Dasein* and quality coincide with one another.

With the emergence of negation, however, there arises a difference between two elements that clearly stand over against one another. The difference between negation and reality is thus a stable, determinate difference. This difference is *stable* because negation and reality are themselves stable: neither is a vanishing determination, but each is the settled unity of being and non-being (or, more precisely, each is non-being, or determinacy, "in the form of being" and thus a form of quality). The difference between negation and reality is *determinate* because, in their stability, one of them – negation – is explicitly *negative* and so is explicitly *not* the other; this negative quality thus sets itself over against the other – affirmative – quality and thereby differentiates the latter from itself. Note that this difference is a wholly new kind of difference. Unlike the difference between being and nothing, it is a difference between stable elements that do not vanish into their opposites; reality and negation thus coexist, side by side, in the way pure being and pure nothing cannot. Unlike the difference between *Dasein* and quality, however, the difference between reality and negation is one in which one element is explicitly *not* the other.

Thus, not only are reality and negation two forms of determinate being, of quality, but the difference between them is itself *determinate*. Indeed, they are the logical components of determinate difference. A determinate difference is not one between being and nothing, but between real quality and its negation. Yet this is not the end of the story, for the relation between reality and negation is more complicated than I have indicated so far. Not only is each distinct from the other, but each must also contain the other.

The reason why is that each is a form of quality, but it cannot be quality all by itself. Reality is clearly different from negation. As a form of quality, however, reality is *determinate* being. Determinacy in turn consists in *non-being*, in *not* being this or that; and such non-being is fully explicit only in negation. It is as negation, therefore, that quality is properly determinate. Accordingly, reality as *determinate* must contain *negation*: "reality is quality, determinate being [*Dasein*]; it therefore contains the moment of the negative [*des Negativen*] and

is the determinate being [*das Bestimmte*] that it is only through it" (SL 86 / LS 106).¹³ Note that this judgement is not just an external reflection made by us. It is grounded in the logical structure of reality itself. "Reality itself contains negation", because it is a form of *quality* and so must be *determinate* being (SL 88 / LS 109).

Yet, Hegel notes, the fact that it contains negation is "concealed" (*versteckt*) in reality as such, because the latter is quality "with the accent on *being*" (SL 85 / LS 105). Reality as quality, as determinate, must contain negation, but reality as *reality* conceals that fact from view. Philosophers and non-philosophers alike are thus often misled by the nature of reality itself to think of it only as "something positive from which the negative [*Verneinung*], limitation, lack are excluded" (SL 85 / LS 105). Indeed, Hegel claims, the familiar metaphysical conception of God (shared by Kant) as the "*sum-total of all realities*", as "*something affirmative that contains no negation*", is the product of being misled in precisely this way (SL 86 / LS 106). To remove negation from reality, however, is ultimately to deprive it of determinacy, and so to reduce it to pure indeterminate being, which vanishes in turn into *nothing*. Consequently, Hegel maintains, "the said reality in everything real, the *being* [*Sein*] in all *determinate being* [*Dasein*] that should express the concept of God, is nothing else than abstract being, the same as nothing" (SL 87 / LS 107) – if not explicitly, then implicitly.¹⁴ It is thus not just life-denying nihilism that gives rise to the empty God that Nietzsche equates with "nothing", but the *understanding* that, misled or encouraged by the category of reality itself, keeps the real free of negation.¹⁵

Just as reality must contain negation, so, too, must negation contain reality. Negation is quality with the accent on the *negative*. As a form of quality, however, it must be determinate *being*, *Da-sein*, and so must also be affirmative. Yet quality is explicitly affirmative – is clearly and explicitly *being* that is determinate – only when it takes the form of reality. If negation is not merely to be negative, therefore, but to be "affirmative, belonging to determinate being" (*seiend, dem Dasein angehörig*), it must itself contain reality (SL 88 / LS 109). And yet negation hides the fact that it contains reality, because it is quality with a clear accent on the *negative*.

Unlike being and nothing, reality and negation do not vanish into one another, but are stably and determinately different. Yet they are not merely different, since both are equally forms of *quality*. As such quality each must be supplemented by, and so contain, the other – though this fact is hidden by the "accent" that gives each its distinctive character. Reality and negation are thus not just contrasting categories, but *each conceals the other in itself*. Accordingly, the relation between them should be represented as follows: reality (negation) / negation (reality) (where the forward slash symbolizes the fact that they are different, indeed are the two sides of one single difference). With this insight, the logic of *Dasein* is brought to an end.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Something and Other

In his *Logic* Hegel initially shows that being must be determinate and so be quality, and that quality in turn must be both real and negative. The necessity at work here is logical. Hegel is not describing a process in time, but he sets out the *logic* that requires being to be reality and negation. He now shows that being must be the being of *something*. This is because determinate being – quality – must be *self-relating*.

For Kant, “something” is the most abstract concept we can entertain (besides “nothing”).¹ This concept cannot be derived from that of “nothing” or from any other concept, but is simply fundamental to thought. In Kant’s view, therefore, we cannot explain why we should employ the concept of “something”. Hegel, by contrast, thinks we can explain this. According to speculative logic, the category of pure being gives rise to that of determinate being and then that of something, and so in this way it makes the latter logically necessary. Moreover, since such logic is at the same time a metaphysics, it shows that being itself thereby requires that there *be* something. Indeed, beginning with nothing leads to the same result, since nothing, via becoming and determinate being, also makes *something* necessary. Hegel’s logic thus not only explains why we must think in terms of “something”, but it also provides a definitive answer to the question posed by Leibniz: “*why is there something rather than nothing?*”²

FROM DASEIN TO SOMETHING (ETWAS)

At the beginning of 1.1.2.A.c Hegel states once again that quality differentiates itself into reality and negation. He points out, however, that this difference is equally “null and sublated” (*nichtig und aufgehoben*), for its two sides are not simply different from one another. On the one hand, reality and negation are

both forms of quality and so in that respect are the same. On the other hand, each contains the other and so is the same unity of both, albeit with a different “accent”: as Hegel writes, “reality itself contains negation [. . .]. Equally, negation is determinate being [*Dasein*]” (SL 88 / LS 109).

This does not mean that the difference between the two forms of quality disappears altogether. As we saw in the last chapter, the difference between reality and negation is a stable, determinate difference between two moments, one of which – negation – is explicitly *not* the other. This difference, Hegel contends, is definite and irreducible: “the distinction cannot be left out, for it is [*denn er ist*]” (SL 88 / LS 110). To say that this difference is a “sublated” one is thus not to say that there is no difference at all. It is to say that the difference is both preserved and cancelled at the same time. There is, indeed, a difference within quality, but in differing from one another the two sides are also the same: each is what the other is. In differing from the other, therefore, each relates not just to an other, but to *itself*. It encounters itself *in* the other.

This is to be understood in two senses. First, insofar as reality and negation are both forms of quality, the difference between them is one in which *quality* relates to itself. Second, insofar as reality and negation both contain one another, the difference between them is one in which each individually relates to itself in the other: reality relates to itself in negation and vice versa.

Note that in both cases, there emerges the same *new* logical structure. What we now have before us is being that is not just immediate, nor just determinate, but explicitly *self-relating*: “simple self-relation in the form of being” (*einfache, seiende Beziehung auf sich*) (SL 89 / LS 110).³ Pure being and pure nothing can each be described as “equal only to itself”, since each is indeterminate and so not differentiated explicitly from anything else (SL 59 / LS 71-2); but neither contains an internal difference between itself and itself and so neither relates explicitly *to* itself. Now, however, being takes the form of a difference between sides, each of which is the same, and so it does relate explicitly to itself. Note that being can be explicitly self-relating, *only* because it contains a difference between moments that are the same, a difference that is “sublated”. Self-relating being cannot, therefore, occur immediately: it cannot simply *be* there, just like that. It can arise only through the *mediation* of difference and its sublation.

Hegel emphasizes the mediated character of self-relating being in the second paragraph of 1.1.2.A.c.⁴ He points out that *Dasein* that has differentiated itself into reality and negation does not collapse back into its original unity (as either simple *Dasein* or pure being). It becomes “equal to itself” again – in a new form – by relating to itself in differing from itself. In Hegel’s words:

what *de facto* is at hand is this: determinate being [*Dasein*] as such, distinction in it, and the sublation of this distinction; determinate being, not void of distinctions as at the beginning, but as *again* self-equal [*wieder sich selbst*

gleich] through the sublation of the distinction; the simplicity of determinate being mediated through this sublation.

—SL 88-9 / LS 110

Straight after these lines there follows one of those statements that can induce blank incomprehension in readers new to Hegel. Hegel writes: “This sublatedness of the distinction is determinate being’s own [*eigene*] determinacy”. The statement is, however, less impenetrable than it might appear. We already know what it means for the distinction between reality and negation to be “sublated”: it means that this distinction has been preserved and cancelled at the same time. The question, then, is this: what does it mean to say that this distinction’s having been sublated – its “sublatedness” (*Aufgehobensein*) – is determinate being’s *own* determinacy? There are, I think, two meanings embedded in this claim.

The first and most obvious one is this: the sublation of the difference between reality and negation is not imposed on *Dasein* from the outside, but belongs to the latter’s own logical development. *Dasein* divides itself in such a way that it necessarily relates to itself; its very being thus consists in the sublation of the difference to which it gives rise. The “sublatedness” of that difference is *Dasein*’s “*own* determinacy”, therefore, because it is the product of *Dasein* itself.

In this case, *Dasein* – which gives rise to its internal difference and the latter’s sublation – is what we encountered in 1.1.2.A.a and b. Yet Hegel’s statement also suggests another, subtly different, thought: namely, that the sublatedness of the distinction between reality and negation belongs, not just to *Dasein* as it has been conceived so far, but also to the new, *self-relating Dasein* that emerges in 1.1.2.A.c. In this case, such sublatedness is *Dasein*’s *own* determinacy, not because it is generated by *Dasein* as such, but because it belongs to *Dasein* conceived as a self-relating space of *its own*. Indeed, it is the determinacy that constitutes *Dasein* as a space of its own – the determinacy thanks to which *Dasein* is such a space.

Such sublatedness belongs to this new, self-relating *Dasein*, therefore, because it coincides with the latter. *Dasein* is initially divided into two forms: reality and negation. This division then undermines or “sublates” itself, insofar as the two forms – in their difference – are the same. In being the same each of the two relates to *itself* in the other, and so the sublation of the distinction in *Dasein* coincides with the self-relating of *Dasein*. As self-relating, however, *Dasein* is now a space of “ownness”, of (albeit minimal) “selfhood”. The sublation of the distinction in *Dasein* thus coincides with the latter’s being a space of its own and so belongs to that “ownness”. For this reason such sublation or sublatedness can be said to be *Dasein*’s “*own* determinacy”.

Note that in coming to be self-relating, and so being a “self” of its own, *Dasein* acquires a logical *interior* that is missing from previous categories. Pure

being has no internal dimension, but just is immediately itself. It not only has “no difference within it”, as Hegel puts it, but it has no “inside” at all: it is utterly indeterminate being (SL 59 / LS 71). Nor do reality and negation have an interior of their own. In their case, however, this is not because they are indeterminate; it is because each, in its determinacy, is not yet explicitly *self-relating*: each is just one side of a difference and so is what it is only in relation *to the other*. It is true that each “contains” (*enthält*), or “conceals” (*versteckt*), the other in itself (SL 85 / LS 105); yet it does not contain that other within its own “interiority”, since it does not yet constitute a self-relating space of “ownness” that could have an “interior”. As explicitly self-relating, however, *Dasein* does enclose a space of its own *within* its self-relation. Accordingly, Hegel states, it is being that is “*within itself*” (*in sich*).

This marks a significant stage in the logical development of being. Being is no longer pure being (*Sein*), but nor is it merely determinate being (*Dasein*); it is what Hegel calls “*being-within-self*” (*Insichsein*) (SL 89 / LS 110). This is not to be confused with “*being-in-itself*” (*Ansichsein*), which will emerge later.⁵ *Being-in-itself* stands in direct contrast to “*being-for-other*” (*Sein-für-Anderes*) and so, like reality and negation, is one side of a difference (see SL 92-3 / LS 114-15). *Being-within-self*, on the other hand, is simply being with its own “inside” – self-relating being as such.

When being is self-relating in this way, it is what it is *by itself*. Yet it is also being that for the first time *is* “itself”, rather than mere immediacy or determinacy – being that has the *form* of an “itself”. As such, Hegel maintains, being takes the form of “*a determinate being*” (*Daseiendes*) or “*something*” (*Etwas*) (SL 89 / LS 110). In Hegel’s view, therefore, there cannot just be being, nothing, becoming or determinate being, but there must at least be *something*. Why? Because being and nothing are so unstable that they prove to be becoming; becoming then settles into determinate being; and determinate being in turn must be *self-relating* determinacy or “something”. There is something, therefore, not simply because something is *given*, but because, logically, being must take the form of “something”. It is logically and ontologically necessary that there be something.

One should be careful, however, not to misunderstand what Hegel is claiming here. He is not claiming that being “as a whole” must now be conceived as a “thing” on its own. If one were to understand speculative logic as simply another instance of traditional metaphysics, then its fixed subject-matter would be being or being as a whole, and logic would consist in a series of judgements about such being: namely, that it must become and be determinate, and now also be “something”. Logic would thus say *of* being (or *Dasein*) that it is, and must be, a thing in its own right. Speculative logic, however, is not a set of judgements *about* a fixed subject-matter – “being” – but it is rather the process of *discovering* what its subject-matter is, how “being” is to be understood. It is thus an extended

“speculative sentence”, or speculative argument, in which the nature of being gradually discloses itself to thought; or, to put it another way, logic is the process of learning what it is, and what it means, *to be* (see 1: 70 ff.). Hegel’s claim in 1.1.2.A.c is thus not that being or *Dasein* (as a fixed subject-matter) is itself something, but rather that “being” (or “to be”) at this stage *means* “being-something”; or, to put the point in a more ontological way, the claim is that being itself *consists in* being-something. The nature of being requires, therefore, not that *it* be a thing, but simply that *there be* something at all (rather than just determinacy). The further development of speculative logic will then disclose what it is and means to be “something” – beyond being self-relating determinacy – and it will demonstrate, as we shall see in volume 1, chapters 9 and 10, that it means among other things being limited and being finite.

“Something” is one of the commonest concepts we employ in everyday discourse: we say that there is “something” in the garden or “something” on your shirt. Yet we rarely, if ever, reflect on what it means to be “something”. Hegel’s logic shows that being “something” is more than just being at all; but it is also more than just being determinate. To be determinate is to be real in being *negative*. It is to be this, *not* that – red, *not* green, and so on – and so to stand in relation to one’s negation. To be something, by contrast, is to relate to oneself: to be “simple self-relation in the form of being” (SL 89 / LS 110). Something is thus always something of its own. This is true, Hegel claims, of any and every something, because it is the logical structure of something as such. Whether we are confronted with a book, a tree or a speck of dust, insofar as it is *something* at all, it is something of its own – a self-relating determinate being.

Note, by the way, that something is not, as we might be tempted to think, *that which* relates to itself. *That which* relates to itself is quality – as such, or as reality and negation. By contrast, something is constituted by the very *self-relating* of such quality. This is an important point. In the *Logic*, there is no something prior to the emergence of self-relation: there is not first something *which* then relates to itself. Rather, there is quality *which* relates to itself and, in so doing, proves to be *self-relating* being or “something”.

The logical form of something thus consists in self-relation itself. Thanks to this logical form, something is not merely “this, not that”, but an “itself”. That is to say, it has the structure of a – quite minimal – *self*. In this way, Hegel maintains, the category of something prefigures the much richer concept of a “subject”. It is important to recognize that the relation between the two concepts is that way around. Hegel does not model “something” on the concept of a subject – or on that of self-consciousness – but he derives the category of something immanently from that of pure being. In the logical structure of something, however, we can see the self-relation that later – in a more developed form – will characterize subjectivity and self-consciousness.

The logical “intensity of the subject”, Hegel states, is not reached until the logic of the concept, and, as will become clear in his philosophies of nature and spirit, many material conditions need to be in place before explicit self-consciousness can emerge. Neither such “intensity” nor those conditions are present in the bare idea of “something” as such. Nonetheless, Hegel claims, “something” is logically “the beginning of the subject” (SL 89 / LS 110). In any something we encounter, therefore, however meagre it may be, we can see the promise of subjectivity, self-consciousness and spirit (though, in Hegel’s strictly immanent logic, that “promise” can play no role in getting us from something to spirit).

NEGATION AND NEGATIVITY

As we have seen, quality differentiates itself into reality and negation. Reality, however, conceals negation in itself. All quality is *negation*, therefore, either overtly or covertly: it consists in being this, *not* that. As such it stands in direct relation to what is not it, and so is one side or moment of a difference.

Now something is itself a further form of quality or determinate being: it is determinate being that is self-relating. Since it is determinate being, something must still be or contain negation; something is thus not purely affirmative, but is necessarily negative, too. Yet something is not just determinate, or one side of a difference, but is *self-relating* determinacy and so *self-relating* negation. As such, it is *not* just *negation* (or, indeed, reality). Hegel captures this idea by defining something as “the *first negation of negation*” (SL 89 / LS 110). This phrase is not a piece of mystifying jargon, but it highlights a necessary and important aspect of the logical structure of something.

Note that something is not-mere-negation, and so is the negation of negation, because it is self-relating (rather than one-sided) being and negation. As the negation of negation, however, something is *self-negating* negation – negation that is *not*-mere-negation – and in negating itself it relates to itself and so is *self-relating* negation. Thus, not only is something the negation of negation because it is self-relating, but it is also self-relating because it is the negation of negation. The two thoughts are inseparable.⁶

Hegel names the negation of negation, or double negation, “absolute negativity” (*absolute Negativität*) (SL 89 / LS 110). This double, or *second*, negation is to be distinguished from the first negation, or “negation *as such*”, which is a form of merely determinate being. Double negation is less clearly negative than the first, simple negation, since it is *not just* the latter: it is not the direct negation of another moment, but is wholly self-relating negation (and so self-relating being). Yet double negation is also (implicitly at least) more intensely negative than simple negation, precisely because it is negation *twice over*.⁷ In comparison with double negation, therefore, simple negation is abstract, undeveloped negation: negation in its immediacy. Hegel thus refers to

simple negation as “*abstract* negativity” in contrast to the absolute negativity that is double negation.

At this point readers may begin to feel some irritation with Hegel. Is it really necessary to think of “something” in terms of double negation? Or doesn’t this just confirm what critics, from Schopenhauer to Popper, have always claimed: namely, that Hegel’s principal aim is to bamboozle his readers with unintelligible paradoxes? Not at all. Thinking of something as double negation is necessary for the reason we have already stated. Something is a further form of determinate being and thus of overt or covert negation. Yet it is *self-relating* determinacy and so *not* just simple negation. It is thus necessarily the “negation of negation”. This, indeed, is an essential part of what distinguishes something from pure being. Pure being is simply and immediately affirmative; something, by contrast, is affirmative *in not just being negative*. In the case of something, therefore, the positive comprises two negatives; or in Hegel’s words, “*something* is in the form of *being* [*seiend*] as the negation of negation” (SL 89 / LS 110).

Reality is, of course, also affirmative in not being negative, but it differs significantly from something. Reality is “not negation” because it is *opposed* to simple negation, even though it also contains it. Indeed, reality contains simple negation precisely in being opposed to, and so *not* being, such negation. Something, by contrast, is “not negation” because, in relating solely to itself and not being opposed to anything, it is *no longer* simple negation and so is the negation-of-negation. These two ways of “not being negation”, which characterize “reality” and “something” respectively, should be carefully distinguished from one another.

THE OTHER

There must be something because quality relates to itself in differing from itself, and quality or determinate being that is self-relating just *is* “something”. This something is initially conceived as something of its own, as simple “being-within-self”. Hegel goes on to claim, however, that something is never alone, but always has a counterpart, which is “the negative of something”. This negative is the “*other*” (*Anderes*) (SL 90 / LS 111), so something is always to be thought together with what is other than it. Yet it has to be said that Hegel does not explain as clearly as he could why something must have an other. Indeed, the argument he provides in the fifth paragraph of 1.1.2.A.c is actually illegitimate by his own criterion, because it is not immanent.

Hegel begins with an unproblematic reminder of the affirmative character of something: “*something is*, and *is* therefore also a determinate being”. Then, however, he adds the anticipatory remark that something “*is in itself also becoming*” (SL 89-90 / LS 111). This remark, as it stands, is not justified by the logical structure of something as it has been set out so far, but anticipates what

something will later prove to be. This is confirmed a few lines down, when Hegel states that “as becoming, something is a transition, the moments of which are themselves something, and for that reason it is *change* [Veränderung]”: for something does not prove logically to be change until a couple of pages later.⁸ It is from the anticipatory idea that something is “*in itself* also *becoming*”, however, that Hegel derives the *other*. He does so by arguing that, just as pure becoming has being and nothing for its moments, so the becoming that something proves to be must have something and the “negative of something” – the *other* – as its moments. The other is thus not derived immanently from the structure of something as such, and from the structure of *Dasein* that gives rise to something, but it is introduced illegitimately on the basis of an anticipatory remark.

There is, however, a purely immanent reason why something must have an other. This becomes apparent when we recall that quality, which gives rise logically to something, comprises the two moments of reality and negation, and when we render fully explicit the fact that each moment relates to *itself* in differing from the other (because each is contained in the other from which it differs). It is thus not just quality as such that proves to be self-relating, but reality and negation as well. Recall, too, that the difference between reality and negation is not simply eliminated in something, but is “sublated” – that is, cancelled *and* preserved – in it (see 1: 169-70). Something must, therefore, be both self-relating reality *and* self-relating negation, and so must take two different forms at the same time.

Insofar as reality relates to itself, it constitutes something in an affirmative sense. This something coincides with the one we have already encountered, namely something as self-relating *being*. Since reality contains negation, the something it constitutes must also contain negation and so be self-relating negation. Yet it is only implicitly, not explicitly, negative, since it is explicitly affirmative: self-relating *reality*. In Hegel’s words, it is something “in the form of *being* [seiend] as the negation of negation” (SL 89 / LS 110).

In the qualitative difference between reality and negation, however, it is not just the former but also the latter that relates to itself. Negation does so, because it is contained in the reality from which it differs. In relating to itself, negation, like reality, constitutes self-relating being or something; as such, it is no longer simple negation, but the negation of negation. Yet this something differs from the previous something in one obvious respect: it is, explicitly, self-relating *negation*, rather than self-relating *reality* (or quality as such). It thus has a negative, rather than affirmative, “accent”. Hegel calls this explicitly negative something the “other” (SL 90 / LS 111). There must be something because quality is self-relating; there must be something and an *other*, however, because quality itself takes the twin forms of reality and negation. The categories of “something” and “other” are, therefore, both inherent in the nature of thought, and there must also *be* something and an other: “in something we at once hit

upon the other, and we know that there is not only something, but also an other" (EL 148 / 197 [§ 92 A]). Hegel thus cannot be a straightforward monist, for, according to his logic, there must always be at least *two*.

Note that Hegel has described previous categories before this point in the *Logic* as "other" than one another. Being and nothing, for example, are each said to be "unseparated from its other [*Anderes*]" (SL 80 / LS 99). Yet neither being, nor nothing – nor, indeed, reality or negation – is actually the *other* of its counterpart, since being only now takes the explicit form of otherness. It is especially important to distinguish being *other* than something from being a simple *negation*. The other is, indeed, a negation: it is the negation of something. The other thus cannot be conceived without negation (and so does not precede negation logically).⁹ Yet the other is not just simple negation either, since it is *self-relating* negation. Unlike negation, therefore, the other is not merely one side of a difference: it is not bound to something in the way negation is bound to reality. Rather, the other stands apart from something as something separate from it, as something of its own. With the emergence of something and other, therefore, we encounter an altogether new form of difference.

Being and nothing are *immediately* and "*absolutely distinct*"; that is to say, each is purely itself with no trace of the other (SL 60 / LS 72). Being is pure being with no further determination, and nothing is equally sheer and utter nothing. Pure being and sheer nothing thus exclude one another completely and so cannot, and do not, coexist. They do, indeed, vanish into one another; in so doing, however, they do not coexist but alternate: being vanishes into nothing, which vanishes into being, and so on.

Reality and negation, by contrast, do coexist: they are the two sides of a single difference and so are inextricably bound together. They also contain one another, but in so doing do not cease to be moments of a difference. Reality, which conceals negation in itself, is thus reality-not-negation, and negation which conceals reality in itself, is negation-not-reality.

The difference between something and its other is different from both these differences. Like reality and negation, something and its other coexist; but they are not mere moments of a difference, because they are *self-relating* determinacies. Each is thus something of its own, and as such is quite separate from the other. They are inseparable in the sense that there cannot be one without the other: there is never just something but always at least something and an other. Yet they are also separate from one another in being self-relating. Being *other* than something thus consists in being *separate* from it, not in being its simple negation. This difference between two ways of being different is not always recognized in everyday life, nor do Hegel's commentators and critics always credit him with recognizing it or recognize it themselves.¹⁰ It is, however, an important difference that readers should keep clearly in mind as they continue through the *Logic*.

Indeed, as we shall see, all three kinds of difference will appear in various modifications and combinations throughout the *Logic*. Being and nothing are no longer purely themselves, but an immediate difference between them remains “sublated” in subsequent determinations. It is what enables us to distinguish, for example, between quality with the accent on *being* and quality with the accent on the *not* (see 1: 163). This latter difference between *one-sided* determinacies has, for the moment, been lost in the idea of self-relating determinacy. Yet it, too, will re-emerge. Indeed, the further development of something and other consists precisely in their becoming two sides of a single difference. This occurs when something and other prove to be bound together by a common *limit* (*Grenze*); at that point something and other are no longer just *other* than one another, but also the explicit *negation* of one another and so properly *determinate*.¹¹ Yet this is to get ahead of ourselves. Our immediate task is to consider something and other for themselves.

SOMETHING AND OTHER

Hegel’s account of something and other is easier to follow than his accounts of being and determinate being. This is partly because most of us are like Kant: we take everything around us to be at least *something*, and we find it hard to focus on pure “being”, or “determinacy” that is not attached *to* something. We thus have a more intuitive grasp of what it is to be “something” than we have of “determinacy” – even if we do not usually reflect philosophically on the nature of “something” – and much of what Hegel has to say overlaps with our intuitions. Yet Hegel’s account is driven forward only by the logical structure of something and other and so remains purely immanent.

Hegel first notes that both something and the other are *somethings* (SL 90 / LS 112). One has an affirmative and one a negative accent, but both are self-relating being and thus something. In this respect, the relation between something and the other differs from that between reality and negation. Negation contains reality hidden in it (and vice versa), but negation is not itself reality, because it stands in explicit *contrast* to the latter. The other, however, does not simply stand in contrast to something, but stands apart from the latter as a *self-relating* determinacy. Since it is self-relating, it is just as much something as the first something is: it is itself something in being other. This logical point is reflected in our everyday language: for when pointing to two separate things, we say “here is something and here is *something else*”.

Equally, however, both something and the other are *other*. The other is obviously other than the first something. Yet the other is itself something and the first something is *not* it. To be the “negative of something”, however, is to be other (SL 90 / LS 111), so the first something is itself the *other* of the other something. Being something and being other are thus not just set in opposition

to one another, like reality and negation, but they are reversible determinations: the other, as other, is itself something, and something is itself other than it. As Hegel writes,

if we call one being [*Dasein*] A, and the other B, then B is first determined as the other. But A is just as much the other of B. Both are *other* in the same way.

—SL 91 / LS 112

Compared to reality and negation, therefore, there is a certain indeterminacy about something and the other: neither is fixed as this, *not* that. Unlike indeterminate being and nothing, however, something and other do not simply vanish into one another. Rather, each in being itself is also equally the other.

Yet note that being other has now subtly changed its status. At first, the other alone is other, by virtue of being self-relating *negation* (rather than reality). Now, however, being other has proven to be a reversible determination that can be exhibited either by something *or* by the other. Indeed, it has become what Hegel calls an “alien” (*fremd*) determination that belongs specifically to neither. This is because each is now a *something* and is determined to be other only by the presence *outside* it of its counterpart. Being other still means being a self-relating negation, that is, being the negation of something and yet standing apart from the latter as something in its own right. Now, however, neither of the somethings is intrinsically other, but each is other only because there is something for it to be other than. If, therefore, either – *per impossibile* – were to be all on its own, it would not be an *other*, but would simply be self-relating being, or something. It is only the presence of a second something that turns each *into* an “other”; or, as Hegel puts it, each is “determined as other only on account of the other which is outside it” (SL 91 / LS 113). Something and its other are thus merely comparative others: each on its own is just something and is other only in comparison with its counterpart.

Yet this does not mean that being other is a purely contingent determination that something may or may not exhibit. It is, indeed, only thanks to its other that something is an other itself; but there must, logically, always be something *and* an other: “there is no determinate being that is determined only as such, that is not outside a determinate being and therefore not itself an other” (SL 91 / LS 113). Something is thus necessarily an other, because it belongs to the very nature of something to be one of (at least) two.

CHANGE

As we have seen, determinate being must take the form of something – something that is necessarily other than something else. Being other is in turn a

relation: it is being other *than* something. This reflects the fact that being other is explicitly a further form of negation, which is itself a relational category. Nothing (*Nichts*) is just nothing by itself: sheer and utter nothing. Negation (*Negation*), however, is not just negation by itself, but it is the negation of reality and so stands in relation to the latter. Since the other is self-relating *negation*, it is also relative: it is thus the other *of* something. Yet the other is not just negation, but is *self-relating* negation. In Hegel's view, this means that the other is not only "an other in relation to something", but also an other "*for itself apart from something*" (SL 91 / LS 113). This is true, even though being other has proven to be an external determination that something acquires "only on account of the other which is outside it". Something may be an other thanks only to its counterpart, but insofar as it *is* an other it stands apart from its counterpart as that which is other *itself*.

To repeat: being other differs from simply being a negation. To be a negation is to be bound to what one negates – to be red-*not*-green. To be other, however, is to be separate from something, to stand apart from it. This is a necessary consequence of the fact that the other is self-relating. Now being self-relating makes the other another something; but, Hegel claims, it also means that the other stands apart *as other*. As such, the other is not just other-than-something, but it is other in its own right, other "*for itself*".

This idea may strike readers as counterintuitive. Surely, being other is always being other than something else. How can the other be other for itself, quite apart from something else? Hegel insists, however, that the other must be conceived in this way, because standing *apart* from something – being *separate* from it – is inherent in the very idea of being *other*: the other is a self-relating negation and so must be understood to be other in its own right. This thought is reflected in our language whenever we say of something that it is "quite other" or talk simply about "the other" on its own. Furthermore, Hegel points out, Plato distinguished the idea of the other from that of the "one" in his *Parmenides* dialogue and attributed to the other "a nature of its own" (*eine eigene Natur*) (SL 91 / LS 113).¹² This is not to say that Plato understands the other in precisely the way Hegel does. From Hegel's perspective, however, Plato is justified in thinking about the other *as such*, because the very idea of the other requires us to think of it in this way.

Note, by the way, that being separate from something does not erase the fact that the other is other-*than*-something. If the other were to stand alone with no other something to be other than, it would not be *other* at all, but would simply be something *tout court*. The other is other only because it is other than – and so is *not* – something else. In being other than something, however, the other also stands apart from that something as *the other*, as that which is *itself other*. In being other than something, therefore, the other must also have a nature of its own that can be considered apart from its relation to something and apart

from the fact that it is itself something. That nature is the nature of the other as such: what it is *to be other*.

There are two aspects to this nature. On the one hand, the other is a *self-relating* negation: it is “the other for itself” (*das Andere für sich*) (SL 92 / LS 114); on the other hand, it is also a self-relating *negation*. The other must have this negative “accent”, for if it did not, it would simply be something and would not be an other at all. As a form of negation, however, the other retains its relational character and so remains *other-than*. Yet here this relational character is not the one the other exhibits in relation to something else. It is one that belongs to the other’s own nature, to its own separate identity: the other, quite apart from anything else, must be *negatively* related, must be other-than. Insofar as it is wholly self-relating, however, the only thing to which it can be negatively related is itself. The other, considered by itself, in its own right, must therefore be *other than itself*. The distinctive nature of the other, the nature that is all its own, is thus to be “the other of itself and so the other of the other” (SL 92 / LS 114). This is what it is *to be other*.

There is no logical sleight of hand at work here: the logic that Hegel sets out is clear and straightforward. Something is self-relating *being*; the other is self-relating being with a negative accent, or self-relating *negation*. As negation, the other is negatively related to another something and so is other-than-something-else; as self-relating, however, the other is also separate from anything else and has a nature of its own. That nature is what it is *to be other*, and so it comprises – in its separateness – both self-relation *and* negation or negative relation. Since both belong to the other itself, quite apart from its relation to anything else, the other must be negatively related *to itself*. Its self-relation must, therefore, consist in *self-negation*, or in being other than itself. As Hegel puts it, the other is “that which negates itself” (*[das] sich Negierende*) (SL 92 / LS 114).

To be other or *self-relating* negation is thus not just to be something, though it is that; it is also to be other than itself. Or, rather, it is to *become* other than itself: to pass *from* being other *to* being other than the other it is. Indeed, it is also to become other than that, and other than that, and so on. The name that Hegel gives to this process of becoming other is “change” or “alteration” (*Veränderung*). The nature of the other, therefore, is not only to stand apart from another thing, but also, in so doing, to *change*. At this point, being shows itself once more to be dynamic, rather than settled and stable. At the start of speculative logic, pure being and pure nothing both prove to be becoming because each is the “vanishing” of itself into its opposite. Yet becoming then settles logically into determinate being and remains in abeyance throughout the derivation of quality, something and other. Now becoming has been reintroduced by the other. The becoming that re-emerges, however, is no longer just becoming as such, but the process of becoming-*other* or of *othering* oneself. This process is inherent in the very nature of the other and, since every something is also an

other, inherent in the nature of something, too. According to Hegel's logic, therefore, there must be determinate being in the form of something, but every something is necessarily engaged in a process of change.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant maintains that all change in the sphere of appearance presupposes time (see CPR B 230-4). As Hegel conceives it here, however, change is not alteration in time. It cannot be this, since being has not yet proven to be temporal, and will not do so until the philosophy of nature. Change is conceived here as nothing but the process of becoming other than one is, and other than that, and so on. This is not to deny that concrete change in the world requires time. Yet Hegel is not endeavouring here to provide a comprehensive account of temporal, worldly change. His aim is rather to show that, even in the absence of time, every something must change, *purely by virtue of being other*. Time is thus not the ultimate source of change; the latter is made necessary by the simple fact that there is something and something *else* at all.¹³ The intimate connection between being "other" and "change" is obscured by everyday English, though it is evident in the Latin-based word "alter-ation", which contains the Latin "alter" ("other" as one of two). This connection is also apparent to speakers of German, for the German for "change" – *Ver-änderung* – itself contains a form of the word "other" – *Anderes*. Yet Hegel does not derive the connection between being "other" and "change" from words. The connection is a logical one, grounded in the fact that the other, considered by itself, must be and constantly *become* the other of itself.¹⁴

Hegel's account of being other does not, however, end with the derivation of change: for in the very process of change, he argues, the other "remains identical with itself" (SL 92 / LS 114, emphasis added). This is not now to deny that change occurs: the other necessarily becomes *other* than it is, "the other of itself". In so doing, however, it comes to be "the other of the other" and so becomes other – that is, itself – *once again*. In the process of change the other thus *remains* the other that it is; and the more it changes and becomes other than itself, the more it remains the other and so remains itself. It is important to stress again that the other does, indeed, change: such change has shown itself to be logically necessary. Throughout such change, however, the other preserves its identity.

Hegel's argument here is remarkably simple, but it is of great philosophical significance, because it shows that self-identity and change are not in principle at odds with one another, as one might assume. On the contrary, self-identity is preserved *by* the process of change. This, at least, is true of change that consists simply in the other's becoming other than it is – the change to which every something, insofar as it is an *other*, is subject – and at this point in the *Logic* no other conception of change is available.

Yet self-identity, or self-relation, is not just preserved by such change but also *arises* through it. This becomes evident in the course of the concluding

paragraph of 1.1.2.B.a.1. Near the start of that paragraph Hegel states (as noted above) that the other “remains” (*bleibt*) identical with itself through change. The thought here is the one we have just indicated: that in becoming other than itself, the other does not become something radically new, but becomes another instance of what it already is, what it is *before* the change – another instance of being *other*. As Hegel writes, “that into which it [the other] changes is the *other* [. . .]; but that which *changes* [*das sich Verändernde*] is not determined in any different way, but in the same way, to be an other” (SL 92 / LS 114).

Immediately after these lines, however, Hegel draws an important conclusion from what he has just said: since the other, in changing, remains the other it is, it “*goes* [. . .] *together only with itself*” in the other that it becomes.¹⁵ This statement might seem merely to repeat what we already know, but it carries the argument forward. The point to note is that the other does not, and cannot, “go together with itself” *before* it changes; it does so only *through* changing into that which is still (in one respect) itself.

In going together with itself, Hegel explains, the other relates to itself and so proves to be a *self-relating* being or *something*. This is a something, however, that the other cannot be without changing: for it is change that turns the other *into* that which goes together with, and so relates to, itself. According to Hegel, therefore, change does not just leave us with the same old other: it does not just produce another instance of what is there already. Change also gives rise to a new something that does not, and cannot, precede the change but that *arises through it*. In empirical experience we are, of course, familiar with the idea that change transforms an object into something new. Hegel’s point here, however, is not an empirical one. He is claiming that, logically, a thing must acquire through change a new identity that it did not have before. This will not by itself make it an altogether different thing; that happens only when something goes (or is taken) beyond the qualitative limit that makes it what it is, and we have not yet derived the idea of limit (see 1: 203-4). The change to which a thing is subject by virtue of being an other will rather make something new *of* the thing that it is and remains.

Moreover, the fact that something must change also requires it to exhibit a logical structure that is absent from something as such, from something as simple self-relating determinate being. In the next chapter we will examine this logical structure in more detail.¹⁶

CHAPTER NINE

Being-in-itself and Being-for-other

THE SOMETHING THAT ARISES THROUGH CHANGE

As we have seen, something is necessarily other than something else. Yet as *other* it must also be, or become, other than itself; that is to say, it must undergo change. In the process, however, this other simply becomes once again what it already is, namely *other*, and so, as Hegel puts it, it “goes [. . .] *together only with itself*” in the other it becomes. In so doing it proves to be *self-relating* being, or *something* (SL 92 / LS 114).¹ This something, however, cannot just be something as such, but must have a new logical structure – one that it owes to the fact that it arises through change. To discern this structure we must look more closely at change itself.

There is one feature of change in particular that is important to note. This is the fact that the changing other not only relates to itself in the other it becomes but, in relating to itself and so being something, proves *not* just to be the *other* it is. This fact directly determines the new logical structure of something. The latter can no longer be a simple something, because, as the product of change, it must be self-relating being that consists in *not just being other* or, as Hegel puts it, in the “sublation of otherness” (*Aufheben des Andersseins*) (SL 92 / LS 114). Put simply, something must now be, not just something, but something-that-is-not-other – whatever that will turn out to mean.²

Now the otherness that is “sublated” by the new something is initially the otherness that constitutes that something. The something arises because the other *ceases* simply being other, and other than itself, and proves to be *self-relating* being; the something owes its existence, therefore, to the ceasing-to-be

or “sublation” of the very other, or otherness, that generates it. Something as *something*, however, is “reflected into itself” and so has an identity all of its own: it is, in Hegel’s words, a “self-identical something” (SL 92 / LS 114). As such, it necessarily separates itself from otherness and sets the latter outside it as a separate sphere of its own. The new something thereby remains something-that-is-not-other. Since, however, otherness now lies both within and outside the something, the latter is not-other, or not-the-other, in two senses: it is *not* the other or otherness that constitutes it, but also *not* the other that stands apart from it. It is something-that-is-not-the-other-within-it-or-outside-it.

Note that in *not* being the other, something is not simply the *other* of the other, but differs from it in a more overtly negative way. This is the case for the following reason. In the process of change the other proves to be something by relating to itself in becoming other than itself; but proving to be *something* is not itself just another instance of the other’s becoming *other* than itself. The other comes to be something by *ceasing* to be purely other. The something that arises thereby is thus more than just the other of the other, more overtly *negative*: it is *not* – or *not just* – that other.³

Yet this something is not the *explicit* negation of otherness, or of the other outside it, because it is affirmative, self-relating being. Negation is, indeed, contained in the something, since the latter is something-that-is-not-other (and not-the-other). Yet such negation is tempered by the something’s affirmative being. So in what sense is something now more than a simple something? In what sense is it more than just something other than the other? It is more than this in two senses.

On the one hand, something now differs from otherness and the other in a sharper way than something does at first. Initially (in the first paragraphs of 1.1.2.B.a.1) the determinations of “something” and “other” are reversible, since something is equally an other, namely the other of its other. Now, by contrast, something differs from being-other in such a way that the latter does *not* belong to it. Something is now definitely *something*, not other itself or the other outside it.

On the other hand, however, something is now also explicitly connected to the other, as initially it was not. To begin with, something was quite separate from the other, but it is now the direct negation of the latter, or something-that-is-not-the-other. As already noted, this aspect of “not-being-the-other” does not turn something into the *explicit* negation of the other, because the something is affirmatively self-relating. It does, however, build a negative connection with the other into something itself. The something is no longer just something as such but something-that-is-not-the-other; and the other, which is at first separate from something, thereby itself becomes a connected moment of something – a moment to which something is bound by not being it.

Something, as it emerges in the process of change, thus has a double-edged character: it is both distinguished from *and* connected to the other by *not* being

that other. The other in turn is both different from something *and* a moment of it. This is the point Hegel makes in the rather dense lines with which he ends 1.1.2.B.a.1. Something, he writes, is “posited” by the process of change as “reflected into itself”, as self-relating being. Yet it is not merely self-relating, but is “reflected into itself with sublation of otherness” (and so is not-just-other and not-just-the-other). Consequently, it is “a self-*identical* something, from which being-other [*Anderssein*], which is at the same time a moment of it, is therefore distinct and to which being-other does not appertain” (SL 92 / LS 114). Something’s difference from and connection to the other have now to be thought together, since something as it is now conceived exhibits both at the same time.

BEING-IN-ITSELF AND BEING-FOR-OTHER

Something, as it has emerged through change, differs from the other whilst also containing the latter as its moment. As such a moment, the other is built into something explicitly. Yet this does not prevent something differing from that other, for the other, or “otherness”, is built into something *as* that from which the latter differs: “otherness is at once contained in it” – in something – “and yet *separated* [*getrennt*] from it” (SL 92 / LS 114). This means, however, that something no longer stands quite apart from the other, as it does initially; it is, rather, internally connected to the other from which it differs or, as Hegel writes, it stands in explicit “*relation*” (*Beziehung*) to that other. More precisely, something is itself a relation to the other – is itself other-relatedness – since it is itself something-that-is-not-the-other. The name that Hegel gives to such other-relatedness is “*being-for-other*” (*Sein-für-Anderes*). The preposition “for” that Hegel employs here does not indicate that something is at the disposal of the other, or there for the latter’s benefit. It is simply Hegel’s short-hand for “related to”.

Something is thus not only related to another because there is another out there (see SL 91 / LS 113); it is also so related because other-relatedness, or being-for-other, belongs to what it is to be something. Something, as it is here conceived, is *itself* something-in-relation-to-another. To use the terminology favoured at the end of the nineteenth century, something is “internally” related to other things.⁴

Yet this cannot be all there is to something, for the latter is also *self*-relating being and as such is quite different from and unconnected to the other: it is that to which being-other does not “appertain” (*zukommen*). Other-relatedness is thus merely one aspect of something, alongside which there must be another aspect. Hegel names this second aspect – in which something is self-relating and quite distinct from the other – the thing’s “*being-in-itself*” (*Ansichsein*). Every something changes, in Hegel’s view, and as a logical consequence proves to be

other-related. At the same time, however, it also proves to have an intrinsic being of its own: it is not only related to other things, but it is also what it is *in itself*.

Note that, as we remarked in the last chapter (1: 172), being-*in*-itself (*Ansichsein*) is subtly different from being-*within*-self (*Insichsein*). The latter is simply self-relating being, or something, as such; being-*in*-itself, on the other hand, is one aspect or side *of* something: something as self-related *rather than* other-related. Indeed, Hegel maintains, a thing's being-*in*-itself is explicitly opposed to its other-relatedness. Such being-*in*-itself is separate from the latter, since it involves no relation to another thing; yet it is "not being as such, but as relation to itself in *contrast* to [*gegen*] its relation to other" (SL 92 / LS 114). This explicit contrast derives from the fact, highlighted above, that something is now something-that-is-*not*-other: something, at this point in the *Logic*, is what it is in itself, but it is thereby *not* other and *not* other-related, so its being-*in*-itself – rather than standing alone – is directly opposed to its being-for-other. Since being-*in*-itself and being-for-other differ in this way, they are not completely separate and so are not themselves *something* and *something else*. They are, rather, "*moments* of one and the same [something]" that are bound together like reality and negation (SL 92 / LS 115).⁵

Let us first consider being-*in*-itself in more detail. As just noted, this stands opposed to being-for-other; or, as Hegel puts it, it is a "negative relation" to the latter and to the other itself (SL 93 / LS 115).⁶ In this respect it is just one moment of something in relation to another moment. Yet being-*in*-itself is not merely one moment *of* something, but it is the something itself as "relation to itself" (*Beziehung auf sich*), the something as it is in itself *apart* from all relation to what is other. Being-*in*-itself is thus in this respect separate from being-for-other: as Hegel writes, it has all otherness, and all relation to what is other, "outside it" (*außer ihm*) (SL 92-3 / LS 114-15).⁷ Yet being-*in*-itself is separate in this way because it is *not* being-for-other: it is something as it is in its own right *as opposed to* the way it relates to what is other. This very opposition, however, means that being-*in*-itself is not simply separate from being-for-other after all, because in its separateness it remains related – negatively – *to* being-for-other. Being-*in*-itself is thus in fact a subtle fusion of separateness and relatedness – a fusion expressed in the thought that being-*in*-itself is being that has "*withdrawn* from being-other and being-for-other" (*dem Anders-sein und dem Sein-für-Anderes entnommen*) (emphasis added). It is being that has withdrawn into itself and so stands apart from all being-for-other; and yet it is being that has withdrawn into itself specifically *from* all being-for-other and in that sense is logically inseparable from the latter.

Something, at least initially (in 1.1.2.A.c), can be conceived by itself; and even when it is thought together with another, it is conceived as something in its own right. What something is "in itself" (*an sich*), however, is more

ambiguous. On the one hand, it is what something is *itself*, apart from all relation to anything else; on the other hand, it is something insofar as it is *not*-other-related. Something in itself is thus something in its self-relation – without reference to anything else – but as the “*non-being* of being-for-other” (SL 93 / LS 115).

Hegel’s account of being-in-itself is complicated, but it contains an important insight: what something is in itself is not just a simple something, but something insofar as it has withdrawn *into* itself *out of* its relation to other things, or in Hegel’s own words, insofar as it has “turned back out of being-for-other into itself” (SL 93 / LS 115). This means that being-in-itself cannot be conceived, and cannot be what it is, without other-relatedness. To put the point more paradoxically, but no less accurately: what something is in itself *apart* from its relation to others cannot be or be conceived *apart* from its relation to others. The idea that being-in-itself is utterly separate from other-relatedness is a fiction.

A similar logic applies to a thing’s other-relatedness or being-for-other. On the one hand, it is separate from being-in-itself (since the latter is separate from it). This separateness is expressed by the thought that being-for-other is the absence of being-in-itself: in Hegel’s words, “in so far as something is in another or for another, it lacks [*entbehrt*] a being of its own” (SL 93 / LS 115). Yet, on the other hand, being-for-other not only lacks being-in-itself, but it is the explicit lack *of* being-in-itself and so cannot be or be conceived without the latter: for it is a thing’s other-relatedness in explicit *opposition* to its intrinsic being. Being-for-other, therefore, is inextricably tied to what is missing from it.

Being-in-itself and being-for-other thus combine separateness and interrelatedness in one: they stand apart from one another, but in so doing are inseparable. Insofar as they are inseparable, Hegel states, each “itself contains in it [*an ihm*], at the same time, the moment that is distinct [*verschieden*] from it” (SL 92 / LS 115). Yet unlike reality and negation (which are the inseparable moments of *Dasein* rather than something), the one does not conceal the other within itself; rather, each points explicitly *to* the other from which it is separate. Other-relatedness points to the intrinsic being that is lacking in it, and the latter points to the other-relatedness from which it is quite free. As Hegel writes, being-for-other “points to being-in-itself as its being reflected into itself, just as conversely being-in-itself points to being-for-other” (SL 93 / LS 115).

THE IDENTITY OF BEING-IN-ITSELF AND BEING-FOR-OTHER

In 1.1.2.B.a.3 Hegel continues to talk of being “in itself” (*an sich*), but he introduces a new locution to describe being-for-other. What something is for, or in relation to, others, Hegel writes, is what something has “*in it*” or “*an*

ihm". "*Sich*" is the third person reflexive pronoun in German, and is used when the subject is referring to him-, her- or itself. So if in German you want to say "he saw *himself* in the mirror", you would say "er sah *sich* im Spiegel". Hegel employs the word "*sich*", in a way that coincides with ordinary usage, to refer to what something is in *itself*, apart from its relation to other things. The word "*ihm*", by contrast, is the dative form of the third person singular *objective* pronoun (masculine or neuter). It is used when the subject is referring to something or someone other than him- or herself. So if I want to say in German that "I gave the book to *him*", I would say "ich habe *ihm* das Buch gegeben". Hegel thus employs the phrase "*an ihm*" to refer to what something is, not in itself, but from an objective, external point of view – what it is *for another*. Something has a determination or circumstance "*an ihm*", or in *it*, therefore, "insofar as this circumstance is outwardly *in it* [*äußerlich an ihm*], is a being-for-other" (SL 93 / LS 115-16).⁸

Having introduced this term, Hegel goes on to claim that what something is in itself is not merely inseparable from what it has in it, or what it is for others, but is in fact *identical* to the latter: what something is in itself *is* what it is for others, and vice versa. This is because being-in-itself and being-for-other are not two separate somethings, but the *same* something in its twofold relation to itself and to others. It is tempting to think of being-in-itself simply as something in its own right and of being-for-other as *something else*, in which case the two would be altogether separate and would not form a single identity. This, however, would be a category mistake: for being-in-itself and being-for-other are not wholly separate, but in their separateness they are moments of *one* self-identical something, namely the something that arises through change. What confronts us at this point in the *Logic*, therefore, is one and the same something that both is what it is in itself *and* relates to what is other than it. Since the thing is "one and the same" in each case, Hegel contends, it must be *for others* – or "*in it*" (*an ihm*) – "the *same* [*dasselbe*] as it is *in itself*". This is "the identity of being-in-itself and being-for-other" (SL 93 / LS 116).

This does not mean that there is no difference between the two moments of something after all. A thing's intrinsic being can still be distinguished from the ways in which the thing relates to other things: a metal knife, for example, has a certain character that can be distinguished from the ways in which it cuts through butter, or bread, or plastic. Yet what something is in itself is not completely separate from its relation to others, but is itself present *in* the way it relates to others. A thing's intrinsic being is thus not hidden from others, but is outwardly manifest in the thing's relation to them. Conversely, a thing's other-relatedness is the other-relatedness *of* what it is in itself: it is the way the thing's intrinsic being relates *to* other things.

This is one of the most important insights derived in speculative logic, and it clearly sets Hegel against Kant. Kant famously distinguishes things in themselves

from the way they appear to, or are experienced by, us, that is, from the way they are *for us*. Furthermore, he insists that what things may be in themselves is *not* evident in the way they appear.⁹ From Hegel's point of view, however, Kant's conception of the thing in itself as quite distinct from its "being-for-us" – which is a particular form of being-for-other – is a "simple abstraction" that proves, on proper scrutiny, to be logically unsustainable (SL 93 / LS 116).

Kant has epistemic reasons for placing things in themselves beyond our experience. On the one hand, in his view, experience is conditioned by a priori forms of intuition that are purely subjective (though universal in all human beings), so the way things appear to us in those forms cannot disclose what they may be in themselves (see CPR B 42-4). On the other hand, our empirical sensations are the ways in which we are affected by objects in themselves that remain hidden (or must be understood to remain hidden) (see CPR B 34, 344). In Hegel's view, however, Kant's *epistemic* arguments are undermined by the *onto-logical* insight that what something is in itself is necessarily present *in* its relation to what is other (as well as, of course, by the insight that what is subjective can at the same time be objective).

Earlier I argued that Hegel subtly misunderstands Kant's concept of the thing in itself (see 1: 31-4). For Hegel's Kant, the thing in itself is meant to be an indisputable *being* just out of reach, a being that is "utterly a 'beyond' of thought". For Hegel himself, by contrast, Kant's unreachable "thing" is not beyond thought at all, but is an "abstraction" that is produced *by* thought itself (specifically by means of the categories of "negation" and "identity") and that is ultimately "totally *empty*".¹⁰ Hegel's understanding of Kant is, however, mistaken in this respect, since Kant knows full well that the thing in itself, or rather the concept thereof, is the product of thought; and he insists that this concept, far from being empty and abstract, can be further determined using categories such as causality (see CPR B 344). Nonetheless, it remains the case that Kant distinguishes sharply between things as they are thought to be (and so may be) in themselves and things as they *appear to us*, so in that respect Hegel's understanding of Kant is correct.¹¹ The distinction between being-in-itself and being-for-us (or being-for-the-*other*-that-we-are) has, however, now been undermined: for it has emerged that, logically, a thing's intrinsic nature must manifest itself in its relation to other things. This is not to deny that if the forms of intuition described by Kant were indeed merely subjective (which, for Hegel, their a priori status does not require of them), they could obscure the intrinsic nature of things to some extent. It is to deny, however, that nothing whatever of that intrinsic nature can manifest itself in the sensations caused in us by things and thus in our empirical experience of objects. In Hegel's view, Kantian appearances cannot completely hide things in themselves from view, since logically what something is for others, including for the knowing subject, must be – at least to some extent – "the *same* as it is *in itself*" (SL 93 / LS 116).¹²

Hegel's insight into the identity of being-in-itself and being-for-other is, by the way, further developed in the doctrine of essence, where he demonstrates that what is "inner" is present in what is "outer", and also in the philosophy of subjective spirit, where he examines the various ways in which inner subjectivity manifests itself in gestures, facial expressions and posture.¹³ There are romantics who think that what the human being is "within" him- or herself is hidden away from public view and known only to the individual concerned. Yet Hegel's logical insight into the identity of being-in-itself and being-for-other shows this romantic conception to be illusory. What someone is in him- or herself is always evident in some form to others, a fact that professional "mind readers" are often able to exploit with consummate skill.¹⁴

DETERMINATION AND CONSTITUTION

Being at the start of the *Logic* is conceived as pure and indeterminate, but it soon proves to be determinate being or quality. Quality itself takes two forms – affirmative quality, or reality, and negative quality, or negation. Neither quality stands alone, but each is merely one side of quality and, as such, is inseparable from the other. Quality then proves to be not just determinate, but self-relating, being and so takes the form of *something*. Something in turn necessarily coexists with something else, but neither is one-sided in the manner of reality and negation; rather, each stands apart from the other with its own identity.

Something, however, turns out not just to be something as such, but to be what it is *in itself* and to be *other-related*. Like reality and negation, being-in-itself and being-for-other are one-sided moments and so constitute the twofold quality, or *determinacy*, of something. They are determinate because each is the *non-being* of the other. Yet they are not only forms of determinacy, but also ways of being *something*: they are something *as it is in itself* and *as it relates to others*. To put these thoughts together: being-in-itself and being-for-other are the two ways in which something is *something determinate*.

Being-in-itself and being-for-other are, however, not only different from one another, but they also form a unity or identity: what something is in itself is present *in* the way it relates to others. This is because what is in itself and for others is the *same* something: "something is itself one and the same something of both moments, and these are in it [*in ihm*], therefore, undivided" (SL 93 / LS 116). A thing's quality thus does not just comprise the two distinct moments of being-in-itself and being-for-other. It is "the in-itself [*Ansich*] in the simple something essentially in unity with the latter's other moment, *being-in-it* [*An-ihm-sein*]" or being-for-other (SL 95 / LS 118-19). Hegel names this unified quality the "determination" (*Bestimmung*) of something.

A determination must be distinguished from a mere "determinacy" (*Bestimmtheit*). The latter is simply the moment of non-being (*Nichtsein*) that

renders being determinate (see SL 84 / LS 103). A determination, by contrast, is the intrinsic being (*Ansichsein*) of something in its unity with, and present in, the thing's relation to others. Note that a determination is not just a thing's intrinsic being as such. It is this intrinsic being conceived as touching *other* things. Indeed, it is the intrinsic being or character of a thing which it preserves and "asserts" (*geltend macht*) in its relation to others.¹⁵

Hegel defines "determination" in this rather convoluted sentence:

Determination is the affirmative determinacy as the being-in-itself to which something in its determinate being remains true [*gemäß*] in face of its entanglement with the other that would determine it, preserving itself in its equality with itself and asserting the latter in its being-for-other.

—SL 95 / LS 119

A determination, for Hegel, is thus not just a simple determinacy but the "affirmative determinacy" or "being-in-itself" of something. Yet a determination is not merely such being-in-itself in the abstract, but being-in-itself to which something "remains true" in its entanglement with an other. Something "*fulfils*" its determination, therefore, not by holding itself apart from other things, but by adhering to and affirming its own identity in its dealings with them and thereby determining *by itself* how it relates to them.¹⁶

Yet, in spite of the fact that being-in-itself and being-for-other (or other-relatedness) are unified in a determination, there remains a logical difference between them. This difference is built into the very idea of being-in-itself: for the latter is precisely being that has withdrawn *from* the relation to others *into* itself. Hegel points out, however, that the difference is ineliminable for another, broader, reason too: namely, that the categories concerned are categories of being and more particularly of quality (as opposed to quantity and measure). In the doctrine of essence, we will encounter categories, such as cause, that have no meaning at all apart from their counterparts: a cause, taken purely by itself, is not just a cause but the cause-of-an-effect, and an effect, taken purely by itself, is the effect-of-a-cause (see SL 494 / LW 197). In the sphere of quality, by contrast, categories retain a certain immediacy of their own, even though they have logical counterparts: "in the field of the qualitative", Hegel writes, "differences in their sublatedness also retain immediate qualitative being relative to one another" (SL 96 / LS 119). Thus, although reality conceals negation in itself, being real is clearly distinct from being negative. Similarly, although every something is other than something else, being something is distinct from being other. This is why "the meaning of each appears [*erscheint*] complete even without its other" (SL 94 / LS 117). No category of quality can actually be or be conceived without its counterpart, but each *looks* as though it can (whereas cause and effect, to use the familiar terminology, are analytically

connected). Such appearance of independence is misleading, but it is not completely groundless: for it is rooted in the lingering immediacy that keeps each qualitative category distinct in some sense from the other to which it is bound.¹⁷

Being-in-itself and being-for-other are bound to one another, since each is, more or less explicitly, the non-being *of* the other (whereas something and its other are explicitly separate). Indeed, the two moments of something are *united* in the thing's determination. Nonetheless, despite their unity, being-in-itself and being-for-other also remain different, for the reasons just cited; a thing's being-in-itself is thus not simply coextensive with its being-for-other and does not determine it completely. This point now qualifies retrospectively the claim made on 1: 190 that what something is in itself is what it is for others, *and vice versa*: what a thing is in itself does, indeed, manifest itself in its relations to others, but it turns out that what the thing is for others is not itself exhausted by what the thing is in itself. As a consequence, a thing's being-for-other, or other-relatedness, must now take two different forms.¹⁸ One, as we have seen, is determined by the thing's intrinsic being: it is the other-relatedness in which something asserts what it is *in itself* against its other. This is the being-for-other, or relation to what is other, that belongs to the thing's determination (and the claim on 1: 190 is still true of it). Yet there must also be another form of being-for-other that is not determined by the thing's intrinsic being. This is a form of the thing's own other-relatedness – a way in which *it* relates to an other – and so belongs *to* the thing; yet it “does not belong to its being-in-itself” and so is not governed *by* the thing itself. Hegel calls this other aspect of something its *constitution* (*Beschaffenheit*) (SL 96 / LS 119).

The constitution of something stands in direct relation to what is *other* than the thing. That other is itself something with an intrinsic being; moreover, it asserts its intrinsic being in its relation to the first something. Since the constitution of the first something is not determined by that thing itself, it must, therefore, be determined by what the *other* asserts itself to be. Accordingly, Hegel writes, “constituted in this or that way, something is caught up in external influences and relationships” and is “determined by an other” (SL 96 / LS 120). Something does not just *have* a constitution, therefore, but it is *constituted* in a certain way by the other.

Hegel notes that being determined by an other does not just befall something as a matter of contingency; it is a necessary feature of being something at all. Logically, something must have an intrinsic identity, as well as its own way of relating to an other; furthermore, its identity must preserve itself in, and thereby determine, its relation to an other. At the same time, however, such identity cannot completely determine a thing's relation to the other, for there remains a difference between being-in-itself and being-for-other. A thing's own distinctive relation to the other must, therefore, be partly determined by what the other

asserts itself to be. The fact that something is determined – constituted in a certain way – by an *other* is thus grounded, not just in the presence of that other, but also in the logical structure of the something itself. As Hegel puts it, “it is the quality of something to be exposed to this externality and to have a *constitution*” (SL 96 / LS 120).

Now in being determined by an other, something necessarily becomes *other* than it is. To become other than one is, however, is to *change*. A thing’s constitution is thus not stable and self-identical, but is by its nature a changing constitution. Earlier we saw that something must change simply by virtue of the fact that it is itself an *other*. As an other, it is other than something else, but it also stands apart as other and so is an other “for itself”; as such, it is other than itself and, accordingly, is a self-othering or changing other (see SL 92 / LS 114). Through the very process of change, however, the other proves to be a “self-*identical* something” that has an intrinsic nature or “being-in-itself” (preserved through change), but that is also explicitly related to an other thing. What we have now discovered is that this something is subject to being changed *by* the other to which it relates. Such change does not belong to something simply by virtue of *its* being an other, but it is “posited in the something” by something else (SL 97 / LS 121). This change does not, however, affect the whole something. As Hegel points out, “insofar as something changes” – in this new respect – “the change falls within its constitution”; the latter “is that *in* the something [am *Etwas*] which becomes an other” (SL 96 / LS 120). By contrast, what something is in itself remains untouched by such change: “the something itself preserves itself in the change, which affects only this unstable surface of its otherness [*Anderssein*], not its determination”.

Something is what it is *in itself* insofar as it has withdrawn into itself *out of* its other-relatedness. Yet the thing’s being-in-itself also asserts itself *in* its other-relatedness and thereby proves to be its determination. We now see that this determination itself remains withdrawn from, and indifferent to, the other-relatedness – the constitution – that exposes something to change. We are about to discover, however, that the clear difference between a thing’s determination and its constitution is not as clear as it first appears because each in fact proves to be the other.

THE IDENTITY OF DETERMINATION AND CONSTITUTION

Consider first a thing’s determination. This is not just what the thing is in itself, but the latter insofar as it asserts itself in, and governs, the thing’s relation to an other. A thing’s determination is thus in direct contact with what is *other* than the thing. This means, however, that it is not immune to the influence of that other; on the contrary, “the determination is thereby as such open to the

relation to what is other”, and this relationship “brings otherness into being-in-itself or into the determination” (SL 97 / LS 120).

Since the thing’s intrinsic being, in the form of its determination, touches what is other than the thing, that other is itself brought into contact with, and so brought *into*, the heart of the thing. Yet this means in turn that the other can *change* a thing’s intrinsic being and determination. The latter proves, therefore, to be no different from the thing’s constitution. We have seen the thing divide itself into its determination and constitution, but it now turns out that it is constitution all the way down, for it is vulnerable to being determined and changed by an other right to its core. In Hegel’s words, a thing’s “determination is thereby reduced to constitution” (SL 97 / LS 120).

Yet this does not altogether eliminate the determination of the thing, for its constitution converts itself back into the latter. A thing’s constitution is a way the thing relates to something else. It is not the thing’s intrinsic being or being-in-itself, but a way in which the thing is other than, and so *for*, another thing, a way in which the thing is *an other*. More specifically, it is the thing’s way of being other, insofar as this is determined *by the other*, rather than by the thing itself. In being determined by the other, however, the thing’s constitution is itself “othered” or changed and so becomes other than it is; the thing thereby becomes other than the *other* it is, or “the other of itself” (SL 97 / LS 120). As we saw earlier, however, the other that becomes other than itself *remains* other in so doing, and so simply relates to itself, and so proves to be *self-relating* being or *something* (see SL 92 / LS 114). This something in turn has an intrinsic being of its own – its being-in-itself – and is other-related. Furthermore, its intrinsic being preserves itself in its other-relatedness and so forms the thing’s determination. In changing, or rather suffering change to, its *constitution* – and so becoming other than the other it is – something must therefore have a *determination* after all (SL 97 / LS 120).¹⁹

The changes that other things bring about in something may well alter the thing’s intrinsic being and identity, but they do not deprive the thing of such an identity altogether; on the contrary, they give it a new, reconstituted intrinsic being. This is an inevitable consequence of the nature of change as it is conceived here: to change something is, necessarily, to give it a new being and identity *of its own*. From the perspective of Hegel’s logic, there is nothing that the foes of “intrinsic being” or being-in-itself – such as, for example, Nietzsche – can do about it.²⁰

This does not mean, by the way, that such change necessarily produces a different thing altogether. It might do so, but that is not a thought we can entertain here. A thing turns into a wholly different thing, only when it *ceases* to be what it is, that is, when it goes beyond its qualitative limit; the concept of limit, however, has not yet been derived. What we have learned here, therefore, is simply that each thing is vulnerable to being *changed* –

reconstituted – in its innermost being, whether it remains that thing or not. All things must have an intrinsic being, but there is no part of a thing that is immune to the effects of other things. What something is in itself is therefore not fixed but alterable.

The logical structure of something thus turns out to be complex and dynamic. Something must have an intrinsic being, or determination, of its own that remains what it is, as other aspects of the thing are changed by the encounter with other things. Such intrinsic being is not a mere fiction, but is logically and ontologically necessary. Yet this intrinsic being is itself vulnerable to being changed by other things and in that respect forms part of the *constitution* of the thing. At the same time, however, it remains logically distinct from the latter, since it is perpetually reconstituted as the thing's new *intrinsic* being or character by the changes that are imposed on it. Despite the fact that it is subject to change, therefore, a thing's intrinsic character or "being-in-itself", in each new form that it acquires, remains distinct from, and enjoys a certain stability relative to, other mutable features of the thing. So, according to speculative logic, no thing has an absolutely unchanging identity, but every aspect of things is exposed to the transformative influence of other things. Yet things still have an intrinsic character that, at each stage of its mutation, confers a relatively stable identity on them.²¹

There is, however a further point to add. Properly understood, what something is in itself is not wholly separate from its overall constitution, but belongs to – while still differing from – the latter. It must, therefore, make itself felt *in* that constitution and affect the way that other things affect and change it. The way a thing is transformed by another thus depends in part on what that thing is in itself: a flame applied to paper produces a different effect from one applied to a pan of water. In Hegel's words,

inasmuch as the two [determination and constitution] are also to be held apart, constitution, which appears to be grounded in something external, in an other as such, also *depends* on determination, and the determining from outside is at the same time determined by the something's own, immanent determination.

—SL 97 / LS 120-1

Yet that immanent determination is itself subject to change as the thing is altered and re-constituted by others, for, as we have seen, change does not just befall the "surface" of a thing, but transforms the thing at its core: "something" – as a whole – "changes with its constitution".

As noted above, however, such change does not make something a different thing altogether unless it pushes the thing beyond the *limit* that defines it as that thing. We now need to consider how the idea of limit itself arises.

THE DERIVATION OF LIMIT

Determination and constitution do not just conceal one another within themselves (like reality and negation), nor do they just point *to* one another (like being-in-itself and being-for-other), but each *becomes* the other: “determination passes over [*geht über*] into constitution on its own, and constitution into determination” (SL 97 / LS 120). In so doing, Hegel maintains, they undermine – without eliminating – the difference between them and so form one something. Determination and constitution are, of course, moments of one something from the start, rather than two separate things; nonetheless, there is initially a difference between them – a difference that divides the something in two. By becoming one another, however, they re-establish the unity of the something to which they belong.

More specifically, determination and constitution form one something because each, in proving to be the other, relates to *itself* in that other, and both together thus constitute one space of *self-relating* determinate being. In this way, they turn out, not just to be moments *of* something, but, through undermining the difference between them, to “posit” that something themselves. As Hegel puts it, “the transition of determination and constitution into each other is at first the sublation of their distinction, and thereby determinate being [*Dasein*] or something [*Etwas*] as such is posited [*gesetzt*]” (SL 97 / LS 121).²²

Note the subtle difference between the unity of determination and constitution and the unities established by previous pairs of categories. Like determination and constitution, being and nothing “pass over” into one another (in becoming), but, unlike the former, each simply vanishes in so doing. There is, therefore, no settled determinate difference between them in which they coexist and relate to one another; accordingly, neither can relate to itself in relating to the other and they do not form a space of self-relating being, or “something”, together. Reality and negation do relate to themselves in differing from one another and so constitute “something”; but each “conceals” the other within it, rather than passing over into the other, and so their unity is again different from that of determination and constitution.

There is also a significant difference between the unity of determination and constitution, on the one hand, and the unity of being-in-itself and being-for-other, on the other hand. Being-in-itself and being-for-other clearly differ from one another, but their difference is wholly internal to the something that emerges through change: it is the difference between the two moments *of* and *in* that something. The latter is thus not fundamentally divided in two by this difference, but is “one and same” something in itself and in its relation to others (SL 93 / LS 116). This in turn grounds the “identity of being-in-itself and being-for-other”: the two moments do not pass over into one another, but they form a single unity or identity because they are the *same* something in two different forms. The something thus necessarily expresses what it is in itself *in* its other-

relatedness, and its being-in-itself thereby proves to be its *determination* (which just is the unity of its being-in-itself and being-for-other).

In contrast to these two moments, determination and constitution do divide something in two. The constitution, we recall, is not just the moment of other-relatedness within something, but the thing's other-relatedness as determined by *an other*; with the logical emergence of its constitution, therefore, something becomes divided between what it determines itself to be and what another determines it to be. This means in turn that no unity or identity between determination and constitution is established by the simple fact that they are moments of one something: for the constitution is distinguished from its counterpart by being the work of another thing. A unity between the two moments arises, therefore, only when they pass over into one another in the manner we have described: that is, when the determination of a thing is changed by an other and so becomes part of the thing's constitution, but such change – to its now all-encompassing constitution – itself confers a new intrinsic being and determination on the thing.

As noted above, the unity that is formed in this way by determination and constitution is that of one *something*. As we shall now see, however, this something has a new logical structure that we have not encountered before. This structure does not replace the determinations, or moments,²³ that have already been shown to belong to something, but it belongs to something along with them.

When something first arises (in 1.1.2.A.c), it is simple self-relating being, and, though it has the other as its counterpart, this does not compromise the self-identity of something. The something then splits into its being-in-itself and being-for-other, but remains one and the same something; once again, therefore, it retains its integrity and self-identity as a thing while relating to another. When, however, a thing's being-in-itself is understood to form a unity with its other-relatedness, that is, to be its determination, the thing's other-relatedness can remain distinct from that determination only by being determined by *another* thing. At this point, therefore, something is not just accompanied by or related to another, but its own being – in the form of its constitution – is determined by something else, and for the first time it loses some of its integrity and self-identity. This self-identity is further undermined when the thing's intrinsic being is reconstituted by the other. The reconstituted thing still has an *intrinsic being* and so in that sense preserves its self-identity in face of the other; yet this intrinsic being remains vulnerable to further change by the *other* and so in that sense the thing's identity is a fractured one.

With the “sublation” of the difference between determination and constitution, however, something proves once again to be a unified, *self-identical* something. Yet, since determination and constitution are both ways of relating to *another*, this something must itself relate to another something:

there are thus necessarily “two somethings” (SL 97 / LS 121). Moreover, each something is not just accompanied by the other or related to the other in ways that leave its self-identity unaffected, but in its self-identity it is exposed to, and affected by, the other *in every aspect of its being*. This includes what it is *in itself*, because the thing’s determination “brings otherness into being-in-itself” (SL 97 / LS 120). Each self-identical something thus contains within itself – within its intrinsic being – a direct connection to an other that is a source of change and negation. Accordingly, as Hegel puts it, “something relates itself *in this way through itself* to the other [*verhält sich so aus sich selbst zum Anderen*], because otherness is posited in it as its own moment” (SL 97 / LS 121).²⁴ As we shall now see, however, this intimate relation of the reunified something to its other must be, or become, more thoroughly *negative* than any relation between them we have met so far. This is due to the very fact that the other now touches, and so can alter, the heart of the thing.

When something first proves to be determinate (in 1.1.2.B.a.2), it is conceived as the “sublation of otherness”, or something-that-is-not-other (and not-the-other) (SL 92 / LS 114). Yet the moment of negation in something is tempered by the fact that the thing is, above all, affirmatively self-relating being (see 1: 186). Something is thus related to, or is *for*, another, but this other-relatedness is not the explicit negation of the other: it is simply the thing’s being connected to another, or what Hegel describes as the “affirmative [*affirmative*] community of something with its other” (SL 98 / LS 122). Nor is something the explicit negation of the other insofar as it is what it is *in itself* (*an sich*). In this latter respect, it has withdrawn into itself out of its other-relatedness, and so *away* from the other; but it has withdrawn into its own affirmative self-relation, into its intrinsic *being*. Neither as being-for-other, nor as being-in-itself, therefore, is something the explicit *negation* of the other (even though the two moments of something are, more or less explicitly, the non-being of one another [see 1: 188-9]).

Equally, before it is assigned a constitution something is not subject to negation *by* the other. It is not affected or altered by the other, but rests, secure in itself, beside the other. In this sense, once again, it does not itself negate the other. The thing does, indeed, assert its intrinsic being or character in its relation to the other (as its “determination”), and may alter the other in so doing. Such alteration of the other is, however, merely the by-product of the thing’s self-assertion; the thing does not seek actively to *negate* the other, because the other poses no threat to it (so to speak). Despite asserting itself in its relation to the other, therefore, the thing is, as it were, content to leave the other itself in peace.

Now, by contrast, with the unifying of its determination and constitution, no dimension of something is unaffected by the other, because the latter reaches into the heart of the thing. Something cannot, therefore, just leave the other in

peace. On the contrary, it can now be truly *itself* – be *this* self-identical something, as opposed to what the other makes of it – only by *negating* the other that touches, and threatens to change, its core. In Hegel's words, something “relates to itself *by means of* the sublation of the otherness which in the determination is reflected into being-in-itself” (SL 97 / LS 121). Something thus now has a new logical structure. It still has being-in-itself and being-for-other, and it still has a determination and constitution. Yet it now preserves its identity as *this* thing by explicitly negating the other: it is something in explicitly *not-being-the-other*. Its “being-within-self” (*Insichsein*) – its being something – “includes the negation within it, by means of which it now has its affirmative determinate being at all” (SL 97-8 / LS 121).²⁵

Something's negation of the other cannot, however, consist merely in changing it, but must be thoroughly negative: it must involve *shutting out* the other that touches and threatens every aspect of its being. When (or insofar as) something is less developed logically and enjoys an intrinsic being of its own that is untouched by the other, it does not need to keep the other at bay but can allow part of itself to be connected to the other or be “other-related”: being-in-itself and “affirmative” other-relatedness thus go hand-in-hand. Now, however, something has no space of its own, untouched by the other, in which to be truly *itself*, in which to be *this* affirmative, self-relating and self-identical something. It can be a truly self-identical something, therefore, only by excluding the other from itself.

Yet have we not seen (on 1: 196) that, in being reconstituted by another, a thing acquires a new intrinsic being and determination, a new identity of its own? And is this not sufficient to allow something to be itself while being changed by another? Ultimately, no – because the thing is given this new identity *by the other*. This identity alone, therefore, does not make the thing *this* specific thing, as opposed to something else. It does not by itself enable the thing to be what *it* is in face of the other – the other that can transform every aspect of it. The thing can be what *it* is and not the other, therefore, only through the exclusion of the other. This does not mean that the thing must exclude the other utterly, such that it is no longer vulnerable at all to being reconstituted by the latter. But it must exclude the other in *some* respect if it is to preserve its *own* identity.

Something, conceived in this new way, thus has a twofold relation to the other. On the one hand, the other is built into something logically, since the latter is truly itself only in *not-being-the-other*. On the other hand, the other is “placed [*gesetzt*]” – by the something – “outside the something” (SL 98 / LS 121), since something is precisely *not* the other. The other is built into the thing, therefore, as that which lies *outside it*.

Hegel pulls these two thoughts together in these lines: “being-within-self is the non-being of the otherness that is contained in it but that at the same time

has a distinct being [*als seiend unterschieden [ist]*]” (SL 98 / LS 122). Both parts of this thought must be given equal weight. Something is within itself the non-being of the other, and so is inseparably bound to the latter; indeed it contains the latter as its – negated, excluded – moment. Yet something is the *non-being* of the other, and so is explicitly that which the other *is not*: in other words, it is where the other *stops*. When something and its other first arise, the difference between them is somewhat indeterminate, since “something is just as much an other as the other is” (SL 98 / LS 122). Now, by contrast, there is a clear, determinate difference between the two, because something shuts the other out (in some respect) and so is “*the ceasing of an other in it*” (*das Aufhören eines Anderen an ihm*) (SL 98 / LS 122). Conceived in this way, Hegel writes, something is the *limit* (*Grenze*) of the other – where the other ends – and the other in turn, as something, is the limit of the first something. Note that something and its other are the same insofar as each sets a limit to the other, and that in that sense the difference between them is still somewhat indeterminate. In limiting the other, however, each definitely shuts out the other, and in that sense the difference between them is *determinate*, indeed more determinate than at any point so far.²⁶

A limited thing, however, is not just determinate, but is also, equally, something; indeed, it is the explicit fusion of the two. Something limited is first of all *something* or “being-within-self”. As such, it is determinate being or negation that is not just negation but rather self-relating being. Something limited, as something, is thus the negation of negation, or “*absolute negativity*” (SL 89 / LS 110). Yet something limited *is* something – *this* something, as opposed to what the other makes of it – only in being the simple, and definite, *negation* of an other, in shutting that other out. As such, it is fully *determinate*. This moment of determinacy – of *not-being-the-other* – is immanent in the limited something; indeed, it is coextensive with the latter, or “identical with the being-within-self” of the something (SL 98 / LS 122). The limited something is thus the fully determinate something. Insofar as something has a constitution and a (reconstituted) determination, it is partly the product of other things; only insofar as it is where another stops, therefore, is it definitely *this* something, *not* something else.

Whereas the category of something is a further development of reality (and ultimately of being), the thought of limit is a further development of negation (and ultimately of nothing). It is the moment of explicit and definite negation, or non-being, that belongs specifically to, and is immanent in, something. At the same time, the limit contained in something is the non-being of *another* something; a limit is thus a further form of other-relatedness. Yet whereas other-relatedness as such is an affirmative relation to another, or simply being connected to another, a limit is an explicitly negative relation to another. It is the moment of definitely not being the other – of putting a stop to the other –

that belongs to every something. In Hegel's words, a limit is not just a thing's *being* for another, but its "*non-being-for-other*" (*Nichtsein-für-Anderes*) (SL 98 / LS 122). Through the limit it contains, something is thus connected to the other – as explicitly not-that-other – but it is also held apart from that other – as *not* that other. The limit, in other words, is the moment of simple negation or determinacy in something that both joins it to and divides it from another thing.

As indicated above, and as Hegel himself will explain in 1.1.2.B.b.3, the limit at which the other stops and something begins is also the point at which that something stops and the other begins. This limit thus belongs as much to the other as it does to the something: it is the moment of not-being-the-other that both of them share. Hegel anticipates this idea, and pulls together the thoughts I have set out in the preceding paragraphs, in one long sentence that concludes 1.1.2.B.b.2. "There is *one* determinacy", he writes,

that, on the one hand, is identical with the being-within-self [*Insichsein*] of the somethings, as negation of the negation, and also, on the other hand, since these negations are over against one another [*gegeneinander*] as other somethings, joins them together of their own accord and equally separates them, each negating the other. This determinacy is *limit*.

—SL 98 / LS 122

To conclude, however, there is one further complication to mention. As we have seen, a thing that is throughout vulnerable to change preserves its self-identity, and so remains *this* thing at all, by setting a limit to the other and excluding the latter from itself. This limit is thus what ultimately makes something what it is and gives it its defining quality. This limit, however, does not shut out the other in every respect, but only insofar as such exclusion preserves the thing's basic identity. Furthermore, the limit itself not only separates something from, but also connects it to, its other. The limit that is the condition of a thing's identity as *this* thing does not, therefore, render the thing invulnerable to change from the outside (or the inside): the limited thing retains, besides its being-in-itself and its being-for-other, a *changeable* determination and constitution. This means in turn, however, that the thing's basic identity is itself vulnerable. If a thing is changed in such a way that it remains within its limit, and so retains its defining quality, then it remains *this* thing (albeit, perhaps, with a different intrinsic being). If, however, the thing is changed in a way that takes it beyond its limit, and so dissolves its defining quality, then the thing is not just changed but *destroyed* and it becomes a different thing altogether. The limit that gives the thing its basic identity cannot guarantee by itself that the thing will not be destroyed in this way.²⁷

Consider, for example, the car that John owns. Its limit and defining quality is precisely that it is a car, indeed this specific car, *not* some other means of

transport (or just a heap of metal). The rain and snow, however, can change its intrinsic character, such that it is no longer a shiny new Mercedes but a weather-beaten old banger. Nonetheless, it remains the thing it is, as long as it preserves its limit and remains this car, *not* just a heap of metal. If, however, the weather (or an accident) changes its intrinsic character to such an extent that it falls apart, then it loses its defining quality, ceases being the car it is, and becomes something altogether different.

Yet limited things are not just vulnerable to destruction, but they necessarily bring themselves to an end. This is because they are inherently *finite*. In the next chapter we will examine the category of limit in more detail and see how it gives rise, logically, to finitude.

CHAPTER TEN

Limit and Finitude

Hegel's logic has shown that there cannot just be being or, indeed, determinate being, but there must at least be something and something else. Each something must be what it is in itself, but must also be internally related to an other: something does not just stand there in splendid isolation, but it is explicitly connected by its very being to what is other than it (that is, to some other, rather than a specific other). We have now seen that each something must also mark the limit of the other, the point at which the other stops. Indeed, it is only *in* limiting the other that either something can be definitely what *it* is. Hegel notes that the category of limit will prove to be tangled and contradictory (see SL 98 / LS 122). This does not indicate that we have failed to understand it properly, but rather that every something, insofar as it limits something else, is contradictory within itself. The proper attitude for us to adopt is thus not to seek an alternative conception of the limit free from contradiction, but to think through the contradiction and see where it leads us.

Before we do so, however, a few words are required to clarify the relation between the various categories that have emerged so far. It is important to recall that there is no fixed subject-matter in speculative logic. If there were, the different categories could be seen as rival conceptions of this subject-matter, and indeed as conceptions that cancel one another out. So one category would conceive of the subject-matter as merely determinate and thus as the negation of its counterpart, whereas the next one would conceive of it, not as determinate, but as purely self-relating. Similarly, one category would conceive of the subject-matter as unaffected "in itself" by the other to which it relates, whereas a subsequent category would conceive of it as subject to change by the other even in its innermost being. If this were the way to understand the different categories in speculative logic, then it would be easy to dismiss such logic as confused.

The categories, however, are not rival conceptions of a fixed object, but conceptions through which the object of logic gradually *emerges* before our eyes. They are thus to be understood as complementing and expanding on, rather than competing with, one another. They compete with one another, only in the sense that a subsequent category deprives its predecessor of the right to be the last word on the matter at hand. The later category does not, therefore, put the earlier one completely out of order, but reveals it to underdetermine, rather than exhaustively determine, the object of logic. So, as we move from the first category to its successors, we discover that the object of logic is determinate rather than indeterminate being, but the immediate difference between being and nothing remains a moment of determinate being. As we continue, we learn that being must take the form of something with an intrinsic identity that is distinct from the thing's relation to another thing, but also that this "being-in-itself" is vulnerable to the effects of that other. The discovery that something may be reconstituted throughout by what is other does not, however, eliminate the idea that it has an intrinsic being of its own; rather, it turns the latter into a mutable but relatively stable moment of a changing something. Equally, the thought that something limits an other does not eliminate the thought that it may be reconstituted by that other, but the former thought preserves the latter: something is *this* self-identical thing thanks to its limit, but it can be changed by another in a way that keeps it within or takes it beyond that limit. In some cases, a category does, indeed, disappear in its successors, as we saw in the case of becoming, which is not initially present in determinate being. The category does not disappear altogether, however, and invariably re-emerges at some later point, as becoming reappears when something proves to be subject to change.

Each category, therefore, should be understood to identify one dimension or moment of the emerging subject-matter. So through the series of categories that arise in speculative logic we learn what it means to be something at all, then what it means to be something determinate (with an intrinsic being but also an inner relation to what is other), and then what it means to be something rendered fully determinate by the limit that distinguishes it from an other. Each category has a subtly different structure, so what is true of something *as something* differs from what is true of it *as limited*, and so on. One of the great merits of speculative logic, often overlooked by those who see in Hegel only a thinker of the whole, is thus that it focuses our attention on what is distinctive about each aspect of being.

Consider the book on the table before you. What belongs to its being something at all? What belongs to its being a limited and also finite thing? What belongs to its being *one* entity among many? What belongs to its having quantity? This is what speculative logic discloses as it proceeds. At the same time, however, as one category makes the next one necessary, logic gradually builds up an idea of a complete whole – the whole that being proves to be at the

end of logic and that Hegel names the “Idea”. Note, as I have stressed above, that this whole is not presupposed by speculative logic, but emerges – and can only *emerge* – through the work of the different categories (see 1: 68-9, 94). It is the whole that they generate, as they transform themselves, through their distinctive logical structures, into its moments.

THE CONTRADICTIONS IN THE LIMIT

We turn now to consider in more detail the category of “limit”. The limit in something is the point at which the other ends and is no longer present; it is thus the “non-being [*Nichtsein*] of the other” (SL 98 / LS 122). Such a limit is not hidden within something, but is the overt negation of the other by something: it is where something begins and the other *stops*. This limit, by the way, is a qualitative one: it is the limit that keeps *being-a-field* distinct from *being-a-wood*. The field and wood concerned can, of course, adjoin one another in space, but this is irrelevant here. The limit Hegel has in mind is the point at which the distinctive quality of the field gives way to that of the wood, whether the two are adjacent in space or not.¹

Something limits what is other than it, but the other, of course, is also *something*. The limit through which something puts a stop to the other is thus also the limit through which that other – as something – puts a stop to the first something. It is where the other begins and the first something ends. Something, in limiting an other, is thus limited in turn *by* the latter, and the limit thereby proves to be the *non-being* not just of the other but also of the something itself. The limit is where this something is no longer present.

Yet something here *is* what it *is* – is *itself* – only through the limit that it contains. Only by setting a limit to the other is something definitely *this* thing, rather than another; or, as Hegel also puts it, only through the limit does something have its distinctive defining “*quality*” (SL 99 / LS 123). Moreover, this means not just that the limit makes something fully determinate, but that it thereby makes it definitively *something*: the limit now belongs indissolubly to the thing’s being a self-identical thing. When something first emerged, it was a bare something accompanied by a bare other. The logical history of something, however, has revealed that something is truly something – and thus double negation – only in being the *limit* – the simple negation – of the other.²

Yet the limit in something is also the non-being of that thing – where *it* stops and the other begins. This means that something is what it is thanks only to its own non-being, and that the limit is thus the “mediation” through which something – and, in the same way, the other – “*both is and is not*” (SL 99 / LS 123). This idea that something is what it is through its non-being is clearly a strange and contradictory one, but it is made necessary, in Hegel’s view, by the nature of the limit (and, ultimately, by the nature of something and of being as

such). Something is what it is, only because it contains a point at which it brings the other to a stop and is itself brought to a stop by the other. Something is what it is, therefore, only because at some point it *ceases* to be.

The contradiction in the category of limit does not, however, end here, but is further developed by Hegel in 1.1.2.B.b.3.β. The limit, as we know, belongs to something. Yet despite this, the limit is the *non-being* of both something and its other: it is where each one ends and is *no more*. In this latter respect, Hegel notes, there is “an immediate qualitative distinction” between something and the limit: at the limit something ceases to be. Something is thus not there at the limit itself. This means, however, that it must lie to one side of, or beyond, the latter, and the same is true of the other: in Hegel’s words, something and the limit necessarily “fall outside each other [*außereinander*]”. Logically, therefore, the limit is where *neither* something *nor* the other is present, and so it must be “the *middle* [*Mitte*] *between* the two” and “the other of both” (SL 99 / LS 123).³

Hegel is aware that there is a paradox here. Something is what it is through its limit, which thus belongs to the thing. This limit, however, is the non-being of the thing, the point at which the thing is *no longer there*. Since the thing is not present at its limit, there is an immediate difference between the two. This difference, however, necessarily sets something apart from or “outside” its limit. The same is true of the other: it is also *not there* at the limit it shares with something and so is also placed to one side of the limit. The limit, therefore, must fall *between* something and its other, even though it must also belong to them.⁴

Note that this aspect of the limit will not always be evident empirically. We may simply see one quality stop (for example, the black of the letters on this page) and another begin (for example, the white of the page itself). Logically, however, the limit, through which each quality is distinct from the other, must fall between the two as the invisible boundary that separates them. Furthermore, Hegel claims, this aspect of the limit is often taken up by “representation” (*Vorstellung*) and regarded as the whole truth of the matter. So, for representation, a limit is typically a line between two things, such as a furrow or hedge between two fields.⁵ For speculative thought, however, the aspect of the limit, on which representation seizes, contains only half the truth: for, although the limit must indeed fall between something and something else, it also belongs *to* each something and forms an integral part of its identity.

Contrary to what representation believes, the limit is thus not a separate, third “thing” between something and another. There are just *two* things, each of which is itself the limit, or non-being, of the other; yet the limit also falls between the two, because, *as* the non-being of each, it is the point at which neither is present. In Burbidge’s words, the limit is simply the “point of transition” between something and the other, rather than an extra thing altogether.⁶ If, therefore, the hedge between two qualitatively different fields were removed, leaving just the two of them, each would still be the limit of the

other and that limit in turn would still fall invisibly between them. On the other hand, if the fields were identical in quality and distinguished only by the hedge, the latter would still not be a third thing: for it would have to belong *to* each field in turn, as the limit in it at which the other stops, in order for the field concerned to have a determinate identity.

Two things not only lie either side of their common limit, therefore, but each also contains, indeed is itself, the limit of the other. To put the point another way: what each thing *is* – its *Dasein* – lies to one side of the limit, but its being as a whole does not, since it includes the limit itself. This way of putting the point, however, does not (completely) resolve the contradiction here: for it is only *with* its limit that each thing has a being of its own *beyond* its limit. The limit thus both belongs and does not belong to the thing that it defines. This has to be the case because a limited something is what it is only through *containing* a limit from which it is at the same time *distinct*.

There is a contradiction in the initial thought that something is, or contains, the limit of the other – the point at which the other stops – because this means that it also contains its own limit – the point at which *it* stops – and that means in turn that it owes its *being* to its own *non-being*.⁷ There is a further contradiction in the thought that something both is, or contains, that limit *and* lies to one side of or “*beyond*” it, that it both *is* and *is not* that limit. Neither contradiction, however, can simply be eliminated, because each has proven to be a necessary feature of the limit itself (and we thus need the logical equivalent of double vision to understand the limit properly).⁸ The task now, therefore, is to discover what is immanent in the second contradiction (which itself contains the first). Hegel considers each side of the contradiction in turn.

On the one hand, something lies to one side of or, as Hegel says, “outside” the limit. In this respect, it is thus quite distinct from the limit, which falls between it and the other. This means in turn that the limit is not contained in, and does not belong to, something itself. The something must, therefore, be an “unlimited something” or self-relating “determinate being as such” (SL 99 / LS 123). This is not to say that it extends indefinitely in all directions, but that it reverts to being a bare something as we first encountered it, before the idea of limit arose. Furthermore, the other, which lies to the other side of the limit, is unlimited in the same way and is also a bare something. Each is thus in this respect the *same* as the other: they are both simply something, or – which follows directly from being something – they are both simply other than one another. The limit is meant to distinguish something from the other, to be where something begins and the other stops. Yet, insofar as the limit falls between them, it fails to distinguish them, for both are reduced to the same “unlimited” something.

On the other hand, something and the other are now not merely simple “unlimited” things, but things with a definite limit. This limit – that belongs *to*

each one of them (while also falling between them) – keeps them clearly distinct, for it is where one stops and the other begins. In Hegel’s words, something and the other are “now posited with the determinacy as limit, in which both are what they are, distinct from each other” (SL 99 / LS 123-4).⁹ Yet, conceived in this way, something and its other are also *not* distinct, since each is, in precisely the same way, a limited something. *Each* is itself in being the limit of, and so not being, the other, and in that respect each is no different from the other.

Thus, whether something and its other are understood to lie either side of the limit or to contain the limit in themselves, they prove to be *identical* to one another. This is the third contradiction we have encountered in the category of limit. Things with a limit are meant to be clearly determinate and distinct from one another, but the limit that they share, and that also falls between them, makes them exactly the same. Since something and its other are now the same, there is nothing more to be said for the moment about the relation *between* them. There is, however, more to be said about the logical structure that they have in common, the structure that is exhibited by each limited something.

THE TRANSITION TO FINITUDE

We have just seen that two somethings, bound together by a common limit, are identical in two ways. They are identical insofar as each lies beyond that limit and so is simply something or self-relating *Dasein*; they are also identical insofar as each is itself the limit of the other. As Hegel puts it, therefore, *Dasein* and the limit constitute the “double identity” of something and its other (SL 99 / LS 124). Miller takes Hegel’s words to point to a twofold identity between *Dasein* and the limit themselves – as if *they* are the same in two different ways – but this is not what Hegel has in mind. His claim, accurately reflected in di Giovanni’s translation, is that *something* and its *other* are identical in a twofold way: in being simple *Dasein* (or something), on the one hand, and in being a limit, on the other.¹⁰

Dasein and the limit are thus the two components of the logical structure that both something and its other share, the structure that any something must exhibit. The relation between these components is as follows. Something is what it is, and so “has its *Dasein*”, only in and through the *limit* it contains. Yet that limit is where something ceases, where it no longer is: it is the *non-being* of something. As Hegel puts it, the limit and the immediate *Dasein* of something are thus “the negative [*das Negative*] of each other”: the one is *not* the other. Consequently, something must have its *Dasein* and be what it is, *not* in the limit itself, but this side of, or beyond, the limit. And yet this is not the whole truth, for something *is*, and has its *Dasein*, “only in its limit”, indeed only *as* that limit (SL 99-100 / LS 124).

Taken together, these thoughts lead to the following conclusion: a thing's being or *Dasein* lies this side of its limit, but it also points "beyond itself" (*über sich hinaus*) to that limit as its true locus. Indeed, such *Dasein* not only *points* beyond itself, but logically it "passes over" (*übergeht*) into the limit itself, since it is only in and as that *limit* that a thing has *Dasein* and is what it is: a thing has *Dasein* only in and as the limit that lies beyond its *Dasein* (SL 100 / LS 124). This means, however, that the limited something is actually a *dynamic* entity: it does not just rest quietly this side of its limit, but the "*contradiction*" that it contains – that it *is* – "propels it beyond itself" by locating the core of its being *in* its own limit. Note that in the *Logic* this dynamism is not discerned by empirical observation: it is what something logically proves to be. A thing's being or *Dasein* differs from, and so lies to one side of, its limit; yet the thing is only in and as that limit. Logically, therefore, its *Dasein* passes over *into* that limit itself.

The limit, however, is where something stops: it is its non-being. The *being* or *Dasein* of something thus passes over, logically, into its own *non-being*; that is to say, the thing comes to *be* what it is explicitly in *not* being – in *no longer* being – itself. In Hegel's words, the something "declares" its non-being "to be its being, and so it passes over into it" (SL 100 / LS 124). This is not to deny that there is a difference between the being of something and its non-being. Yet, at the same time, something finds its being ultimately, not just within itself, but in its limit and so in its own non-being. It can truly be what it is, therefore, only insofar as it passes from being into non-being, only insofar as it *stops* being what it is. In this way, the limited something brings itself, through what it is, to the point at which it ceases to be: it brings itself to its own *end*. Now something that *is*, only insofar as it comes to an end, is a *finite* (*endlich*) something. Every something, therefore, is necessarily finite. It is limited and brought to a stop by another thing, but it also brings itself to an end. It passes of its own accord into the non-being that is the limit of its being.

In the *Ethics* Spinoza contends that there are finite, as well as infinite, modes, but he does not explain why this should be. Finite things, he writes, are "determined to exist and produce an effect by another cause, which is also finite"; but why there should be finite modes at all remains a mystery.¹¹ All Spinoza says is that "from the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes" – a statement that explains very little.¹² Hegel, by contrast, explains in painstaking detail why there should be finite things. He does so by deriving finitude from the very nature of something and, ultimately, from the nature of being as such.

In particular, finitude is the logical outcome of the fact that being is rendered determinate by – overt or covert – *negation*. Indeed, finitude is simply the result of further "developing" the idea of negation (SL 101 / LS 125). Negation mutates first into the category of the other and then into the other-relatedness

of something. As such other-relatedness, negation is no longer explicitly negative, since it is simply a thing's being-connected-to-another (see 1: 186-7, 200). It becomes overtly negative once more, however, when it turns into the limit by which something puts a stop to something else: for the limit in something is explicitly the *non*-being of the other. Something then proves to be *finite* when it passes over into its *own* non-being or negation, its own limit. For speculative logic, therefore, the presence of finite things is no mystery; it is a necessary consequence of the fact that being is inseparable from negation. The bare determinacy of being thus already presages the finitude of things.

Note, by the way, that finitude is not just *change*, not just the process in which something becomes other than itself. When a thing changes, it can continue to be the same thing, even if it acquires a new intrinsic being. A house, for example, may change its inherent character when an extension is added, but it need not thereby cease being a house, or indeed *this* house (though it can do so) (see 1: 196, 203). As finite, however, a thing necessarily *ceases* to be: it passes, not just from one form of itself into another, but from being into *non-being*. Such finitude, in Hegel's view, is inseparable from being something. There must be being, not just nothing, and being must take the form of something and something else; yet each something, in being what it is, must come to an end. Indeed, its whole being *is* its coming to an end. As Hegel puts it, in a strikingly eloquent passage:

The finite does not just alter, as does something as such, but it *ceases to be* [*vergeht*]; and its ceasing to be is not just a possibility, as if it might be without ceasing to be. Rather, the being as such of finite things is to have the germ of decease [*Vergehen*] as their being-within-self: the hour of their birth is the hour of their death.

—SL 101 / LS 126¹³

For Hegel, therefore, things harbour within themselves what one might call, following Heidegger, their “being-towards-death”: they come to an end through simply being what they are.¹⁴ In this respect, Hegel's understanding of things differs once again from that of Spinoza, with whom he otherwise has certain affinities. In Spinoza's view, nothing in a thing itself brings it to an end; it can be destroyed only by something *else*: “while we attend only to the thing itself, and not to external causes, we shall not be able to find anything in it which can destroy it”.¹⁵ This reflects the fact that Spinoza retains the Parmenidean conviction that being is itself purely affirmative and contains no moment of internal negation (see SL 61 / LS 74). This is not to say that Spinoza banishes negation altogether from his ontology: as Hegel himself points out, Spinoza claims that “determination is negation”. For Spinoza, however, negation is brought to bear on something only from the outside; what something *is*, is

simply what it *is* and contains no negation and no ground of the thing's non-being.¹⁶ For Hegel, by contrast, being is itself shot through with negation. All reality conceals negation within it, and every something consigns itself to non-being by bringing itself to the limit-point at which it ceases to be.

There is a further difference between Spinoza and Hegel: Spinoza draws no clear distinction between being finite and being limited, whereas Hegel does. According to Spinoza, being finite just *is* being limited: "that thing is said to be finite in its own kind that can be limited by another of the same nature".¹⁷ In Hegel's view, every finite thing is also limited, but there is nonetheless a subtle logical difference between being finite and being limited. Being limited is, as such, a relation to something else: it is being brought to a stop by, and putting a stop to, another. Being finite, on the other hand, is a relation to oneself: it is bringing oneself to an end. As we know, something, *qua something*, is simple self-relating being. Something, *qua finite*, is still self-relating being, but now in an overtly negative sense: it is something insofar as it explicitly *negates itself*. Hegel captures this thought in these lines from 1.1.2.B.c: "finite things *are*, but their relation to themselves is that they relate to themselves *negatively* [and] in this very self-relation send themselves beyond themselves, beyond their being" (SL 101 / LS 126).

This is not to deny that things can also be destroyed by other things. Yet such external destruction is not intelligible just through a thing's finitude, precisely because a thing as finite brings itself to an end. A thing's destruction by another depends on its having a constitution and being vulnerable to the effects of others, not just on its being finite. Yet a constitution alone is also insufficient to explain external destruction. The latter is intelligible only when a thing is understood to have a constitution and a *limit*, for only then can it be taken beyond that limit by the effects of others and so be destroyed.

Insofar as a thing is caused to *end* by another, it is indeed rendered *finite* by the latter, but it is not finite in the strict sense. Finitude proper, however, can also be thought together with the constitution of a thing. Having a constitution does not – or does not yet – belong to finitude itself as a distinct dimension of being, since finitude is a (negative) relation to oneself, not to an other. Yet recall that earlier categories are not simply set aside, as logic takes us forward to new ones. The thing that proves to be finite thus retains a constitution, as well as a determination, insofar as it is still *something* (rather than finite). Indeed, finitude is made necessary by the fact that something has both these aspects, since they make the limit necessary and the latter in turn gives rise to finitude. Having a constitution can, therefore, be thought together with finitude, and when this occurs a further thought becomes intelligible: namely that a thing's own finitude can work together with the effects of other things to destroy it. A thing's finitude can itself increase its vulnerability to external destructive forces: as it nears its end and so "negates itself" more explicitly, it may increasingly become prey to the assaults of others. Equally, however, the corrosive effects of other things on

something may themselves hasten its self-destruction. Hegel does not discuss either possibility explicitly in the section on finitude; yet nothing about his method in the *Logic* rules either one out.¹⁸

FINITUDE IN ITS IMMEDIACY

In the merely limited something, before it mutates logically into the finite thing, there is a difference between the limit itself and the *Dasein* that lies to one side of it. In this case, therefore, a thing's affirmative being can be distinguished from the moment of negation that it contains.¹⁹ Insofar as things are finite, however, this is no longer true, for "non-being constitutes their nature, their being". More precisely, their being consists in passing *into* non-being, in coming to an end, so that, as Hegel puts it, "there is no longer left to things an affirmative being *distinct* from their determination to perish" (SL 101 / LS 126). To be sure, insofar as a finite thing is still something, it has an affirmative determination and a constitution, as well as a limit, and relates to another thing with the same features. As *finite*, however, all that something is is in the process of ceasing to be, and there is nothing in it that can avoid the eventual fate of *not being*.

Furthermore, the direction of finite being is exclusively one-way: being passes into non-being, but there is no passage back into being. At the start of the *Logic*, pure being and pure nothing vanish back and forth into one another; finite being, however, propels itself towards an end that is irreversible. As Hegel puts it, the finite "is itself this, to be determined [*bestimmt*] to its end, but only to its end". Finitude is thus what Hegel calls "the most stubborn category of the understanding" (SL 101-2 / LS 126). The finite ceases to be, and *that is it*: end of story. Note that it is not just the understanding that is stubborn, though Hegel does think that the latter has a fixed idea of finitude (as we shall see). Hegel claims that finitude is *itself* a "stubborn" form of being, because it leads inexorably to one result: *non-being*.

It is important to recognize that Hegel takes the finitude of things utterly seriously. In his view, things come to a definitive end from which they do not re-emerge. A certain "sadness" (*Trauer*) thus accompanies the thought of what is finite – at least, for us (SL 101 / LS 126).²⁰ There is, however, nothing we can do about it: finitude is built into the nature of being itself and is logically and ontologically necessary. All things, simply through being what they are, pass into the oblivion of non-being. This fate awaits anything that can be considered "something", whether it be a speck of dust, a human being or the solar system.

In finitude, therefore, negation, or non-being, puts an unqualified end to being. Accordingly, it stands in "abstract opposition" to the latter: being passes into non-being, in which there is *no longer any being*. There is thus a tension at the heart of finitude. On the one hand, finite being is inseparable from negation, since it consists solely in passing into non-being. On the other hand, the non-

being into which finite being passes excludes being altogether: it is “negation *fixed in itself*” that stands “in stark contrast” to being (SL 101-2 / LS 126). Moreover, such non-being is at odds, not only with the finite being whose end it signals, but also with *infinite* being. Finite things pass away into non-being and their “determination” takes them “no further than their *end*”; the finite is thus “the refusal [*Verweigern*] to let itself be brought affirmatively to its affirmative, to the infinite, and to let itself be united with it” (SL 102 / LS 126). Strictly speaking, however, there is no logical reason for Hegel to mention infinity here, because finitude – as it has been conceived so far – does not give rise to it. He mentions it because it is introduced by the *understanding*.

The understanding appears to take finitude most seriously: it holds fast to the latter and insists that it is never anything but finitude. This means, from the understanding’s perspective, that the finite does not participate in infinite being in any way or turn into the latter. It is and remains finite, and is quite opposed to what is infinite. As Hegel writes,

being, absolute being, is ascribed to the infinite. The finite thus remains held fast over against it as its negative; incapable of union with the infinite, it remains absolute on its own side; from the affirmative, from the infinite, it would receive affirmation, and thus it would cease to be; but a union with the infinite is precisely what is declared impossible.

—SL 102 / LS 127

The problem with the understanding, however, is evident in this quotation: by setting the finite over against the infinite, as purely finite, it turns it into that which is absolutely itself, or, as Hegel puts it, “absolute on its own side”. For the understanding, finite being is irreducibly *finite* and never becomes anything other than that. Yet this means that finite being is itself rendered “*imperishable and absolute*” (SL 102 / LS 127). Individual things pass away and are no more, but finite being as such never ceases to be finite, never ceases to cease to be. It is thus unending and *infinite*.

To Hegel’s eyes, therefore, the understanding does not take finitude as seriously as it thinks it does. To take finitude seriously, in Hegel’s view, is to think finite being solely and consistently as *ceasing* to be. This means that we may not conceive of it, in the way the understanding does, as *remaining* eternally and infinitely finite; rather, we must think of it as ceasing to be to such an extent that it ceases even to be mere ceasing to be. That is to say, we must conceive of finite being as ceasing to be purely finite and as turning *into* infinite being.

Hegel is aware that there is a paradox in what he is recommending; yet he sees no alternative. The finite, he writes, “is the limited, the transitory [*das Beschränkte, Vergängliche*]; the finite is *only* the finite, not the imperishable; this lies immediately in its determination and expression”. There is, however,

an inconsistent and a consistent way of conceiving such finitude. The question is “whether in one’s view one insists on the *being of finitude* and the *transitoriness* persists” – the standpoint of the understanding – “or whether the *transitoriness* and the *ceasing-to-be cease to be*” (*ob die Vergänglichkeit und das Vergehen vergeht*) (SL 102 / LS 127). Only in the latter case, Hegel thinks, do we conceive of finitude consistently as what it is, as being that *ceases to be*: for only in this case do we think of it as ceasing to be mere finitude itself and becoming what it is not, namely infinite being. To take finitude seriously, therefore, is not to hold on to it and to insist that it is absolute, but to think through its inherently dialectical nature – the nature that requires it to turn into its opposite.

As we noted earlier (1: 57), Hegel states in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* that the categories “may be looked upon as definitions of the Absolute” (EL 135 / 181 [§ 85]). It is tempting, therefore, to accuse Hegel of presupposing the absolute or infinite all along and so never thinking the finite as such. This accusation is, however, misplaced – and Hegel’s statement misleading – as we can see by paying close attention to his account of finitude. It is evident from that account that Hegel does not conceive of the finite against the horizon of a presupposed infinite, but thinks of the finite – initially, at least – purely in relation to itself. In this respect he differs clearly from Descartes. For Descartes, “my perception of the infinite, that is, God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite”, for I can recognize the limitations of the finite, including of myself, only by comparison with a perfect being.²¹ Hegel, by contrast, understands the finite at first without any reference to the infinite at all. Something proves to be finite through itself – because it has its *being* beyond itself in its limit, in its *non-being*, and so passes over, logically, into the latter. It thus brings itself, through its own being, to the point at which it stops. Accordingly, as we saw above, finite things “relate to themselves *negatively*” and are not from the start the negation of infinite being (SL 101 / LS 126).

By being purely and simply finite, however, finite being turns into infinite being: for, in ceasing to be, and doing nothing but that, finite being necessarily ceases to be such ceasing-to-be and becomes unceasing being. In Hegel’s account, therefore, finitude does not presuppose infinite being, but it gives rise to the latter logically by being thoroughly and consistently *finite*. Earlier in the *Logic* we saw that taking becoming seriously means letting it settle into determinate being. Now we see something similar: to take finitude seriously is not to hold on to it and to keep it free of infinity, as some post-Hegelians try to do, but to let it be what it is, to let it cease being mere finitude and become through its own inherent logic affirmative, infinite being.

In Hegel’s view, finitude is (or proves to be) inseparable from infinity, however it is conceived. The understanding renders finitude itself “*imperishable* and *absolute*” by insisting stubbornly that it *remain* nothing but finite being. Understanding renders finitude absolute, therefore, by adding its own

stubbornness to that of finitude. Hegel, by contrast, shows how the “stubbornness” of finite being alone – its insistence on ceasing to be and *not* remaining what it is – turns it *into* its opposite: being that is no longer merely finite, but unending and infinite. We will see precisely how finite becomes infinite in the next chapter; before that, however, we must look more closely at the logical structure of finite being itself.²²

LIMIT AND LIMITATION

We noted above that the finite thing remains something with a constitution and determination, but that having a constitution does not – or does not yet – belong to finitude as such, as a distinct dimension of being (1: 213). This latter claim now needs to be explained further.

As we have seen, finite things as such “*are*, but the truth of this being is their *end*”. Their being consists, therefore, in passing into non-being, so that, in Hegel’s words, “there *is* no longer left to things an affirmative being *distinct* from their determination to perish” (SL 101 / LS 126). Yet, while this last statement by Hegel is true, it also misses an important aspect of finite things that now needs to be brought to the fore. This consists in the fact that “*something* is finite, or that the finite *is*” (SL 103 / LS 128).

The finite, as finite, consists in coming to its end, in passing into non-being. Yet this means that the finite is not mere non-being from the start, but passes *from* being *into* non-being; and this in turn means that it has a *being* to lose. Such being is destined for non-being; but it does not consist purely in passing into non-being, since it is the being *that* comes to an end in such passing. This being, as is indicated by the last quotation, consists in being *something*. At the start of the *Logic* both pure being and pure nothing vanish into one another, and thereby prove to be nothing but such vanishing, since neither has any determinate identity to be contrasted with the latter. The finite, however, is different. It does, indeed, consist in its own passing away; but it also has a determinate being of its own *that* passes away, since it is not just the finite but *something* finite.

Note that there is a subtle difference between the finite, as it was conceived above and as it is conceived now. The finite, as conceived above, is necessarily a finite something, since something proves, through its own logic, to be finite; and *as* something, the finite retains a constitution and determination. Yet being finite is itself a new quality that consists specifically in *ending* – indeed, in bringing oneself to an end – not in being a something with a constitution and determination. The latter aspects of something do not, therefore, belong to the finite as *finite*, though they do belong to it insofar as it is *still* a something. Now, by contrast, being finite is itself understood to incorporate being something: for being finite consists in passing from *being* into non-being, and such being in

turn consists in being something with all that that entails. The finite something thus now includes a constitution and determination, not just because it is *still* something, but because being something is part of what it means to be *finite*.

This may seem to be an overly subtle distinction, but it matters: for the finite something now has a determination, constitution and limit, not just in the sense in which we have already encountered them, but in a sense that is specific to and constitutive of *being finite* (though these two senses may overlap in some respects). As Hegel writes, “*something* is finite”, or “the finite *is*”, but

something or being is no longer posited abstractly but reflected into itself, and developed as being-within-self [*Insichsein*] that has determination and constitution in it, or, more determinately still, in such a way that it has a limit in it; and this limit, as constituting what is immanent to the something and the quality of its being-within-self, is finitude. It is to be seen what moments are contained in this concept of the finite something.

—SL 103 / LS 128²³

Recall that something first proves to be limited because its determination and constitution form a unified thing whose affirmative being coincides with its now overtly negative relation to the other (see 1: 199-201). Such a thing is the *limit* of its other because it is truly itself only in *not-being-the-other*. As limited, it is thus characterized by what Hegel calls “*non-being-for-other*” rather than being-for-other (SL 98 / LS 122); and accordingly, it no longer explicitly contains the moments of determination and constitution, both of which are forms of *being-for-other*. Insofar as the limited something remains *something* in the previous sense, it still has a determination and a constitution (see 1: 203); insofar as it is something *limited*, however, it lacks these features, so they do not appear in the logic of the limit.

The limited thing then proves to be the finite thing; yet since being finite consists initially in nothing but ceasing-to-be, there is once again no logical space for the moments of determination and constitution (except insofar as the finite is still something in the previous sense). Now, however, the finite has proven not only to be finite and to pass into non-being, but, *as finite*, also to have a *being* that passes *into* non-being; that is, it has proven to be a finite *something*. Since in this respect, it is something affirmative, even though it is destined not to be, it must have the logical structure of an affirmative something and so contain a determination and constitution, as well as a limit. This, however, is a new combination of moments that belongs specifically to the finite something. To discover the distinctive internal structure of the finite something, we thus now need to render explicit how its moments must relate to one another (and, as we will see, the finite something proves not to be truly affirmative after all, but to be principally the negation of negation).

To repeat: a finite thing is not only finite but, *as* finite, it is also *something*, and as such it has a determination and a constitution. As Hegel reminds us (in 1.1.2.B.c.β), a thing's determination combines its intrinsic being (or *Ansich*) with the moment of "otherness" or "being-other" (*Anderssein*) – that is, with the thing's relation to the other (SL 103 / LS 128). The thing's relation to the other in turn includes its constitution, through which it is vulnerable to being altered by the other. Yet the thing's relation to the other now also includes its *limit*: the point at which the thing stops and the other begins. By combining the thing's intrinsic being with its relation to the other, the determination must therefore now combine the former with the thing's limit. The limit in this respect is thus not just the qualitative boundary of the thing, but must form part of the thing's intrinsic being: it must be contained in what the thing is *in itself* (see SL 103 / LS 128). The limit, however, is not just a thing's negative relation to an other, but the *non-being* of the thing itself. The determination thus now incorporates this moment of non-being into the thing's intrinsic being, and as a consequence the thing at its heart is *not* what it *is*.

The finite something, therefore, is not just a thing with a limit, but one with an intrinsic, immanent limit, a limit at its core. The idea of an intrinsic limit, however, subtly transforms the concept of limit itself: for such a limit cannot merely be where a thing ends, but must also belong to, and be an aspect of, its *intrinsic being*. To say that a thing has an intrinsic limit is, indeed, to say that it is brought to a stop by its inner nature, that it ultimately destroys itself.²⁴ Yet it is also to say that it has a limit in what it *is* intrinsically, prior to its ceasing to be. Hegel now renders explicit what a limit in this second, and quite new, sense must be.²⁵

Such a limit must form part of a thing's intrinsic being or "being-in-itself". As a *limit*, however, it must also be the negation of, and so qualitatively different from, the thing's intrinsic being.²⁶ As such, it does not just belong to, but also stands in relation to, that intrinsic being. Previously, the limit was a relation between something and another thing; now, however, the limit must be "the relation [*Beziehung*] of the two sides" that are at issue, namely itself and the intrinsic being of the thing (SL 103 / LS 128).²⁷ This does not mean that the thing no longer has a limit connecting it to another thing; this, however, is the limit in the previous, familiar sense. What is new and distinctive about the *intrinsic* limit is that it must be the relation between itself and the *intrinsic* being to which it belongs.

This relation must be a negative one. It is negative on the part of the limit, since the limit is, by definition, *non-being* and so the negation of the thing's intrinsic being. That intrinsic being (or "being-in-itself") must, however, also relate negatively to the limit. This is due to a logical feature of the limit that we encountered above. As we saw earlier (1: 203), the limit that separates something from something else is common to both of them and turns each into the limit

of the other. The limit thus binds two things together in such a way that each is *not* the other, each is where the other stops. This (or something very similar) is also the case, Hegel maintains, when the two items concerned are a thing's intrinsic being and intrinsic limit. In this case, too, the limit – and the negation it contains – “cuts both ways” (*ist zweischneidig*). The intrinsic being that is limited and negated by the limit is thus in turn the negation of that limit. Accordingly, as Hegel puts it, the finite thing is “the relation of its intrinsic determination to its immanent limit within it, in which it negates the latter” (SL 103 / LS 129).²⁸

There is also another way to explain why the intrinsic being of a thing must relate negatively to the limit that belongs to it. Insofar as something is simply limited – and so before it is finite – its *Dasein* falls “*outside*”, and lies to one side of, its limit (even though the limit also belongs to such *Dasein*); that *Dasein* differs from the limit, therefore, just by being itself (SL 99 / LS 123). A finite thing's intrinsic being does not, however, lie beside the limit it contains, and so does not differ from the latter simply by *being* itself. This is because the limit belongs unambiguously *to* such intrinsic being. Such being can differ from the limit, therefore, only insofar as it is *not* itself intrinsically limited. That is to say, it can differ from its limit only by *negating*, and asserting itself *against*, the latter.

The logical structure of an intrinsic limit is clearly complex. Such a limit, however, is not impossible to understand (and turns out to be one with which we are familiar). This limit belongs to a thing's intrinsic being: it is built into the core of the thing. Yet the thing is also intrinsically different from this limit: in itself it is *not* merely what its limit determines it to be. And yet, the thing's intrinsic being is, precisely, *limited* by that limit. Note that, so understood, the intrinsic limit is no longer simply the point at which the thing stops. It is, rather, that which, in limiting the thing, *prevents it from being what it is intrinsically*. Intrinsically, the thing is *not* what it is limited to being; it is, however, prevented from not being limited *by* its intrinsic limit. Such a limit, Hegel maintains, thereby constitutes a *limitation* of the thing's intrinsic being.²⁹

In Hegel's view, therefore, every thing has two kinds of limit. A simple limit (*Grenze*) is the point at which something, as *this* self-relating *Dasein*, ends and another thing begins. It thus belongs to both things in the relation (though, as finite, a thing also brings itself – independently – to its limit and end). A limitation (*Schranke*), however, belongs solely to what a thing is *an sich*: it is a deficiency *intrinsic* to the thing itself.³⁰ We are required to conceive of a limitation in this way by speculative logic, but this conception is also reflected in everyday language: to say that something has a certain limitation is to say that it cannot do such and such, and that *it* is at fault, not something else. A limitation is thus not simply a *restriction* (the word used by di Giovanni to translate *Schranke*), for a restriction can be imposed on a thing by another

thing, whereas a limitation is inherent in the thing itself – a limitation of *that thing*. Note that Hegel is not now denying that a thing's intrinsic being can be changed by other things. He is arguing, however, that, regardless of the effects things have on one another, every finite thing has an intrinsic limitation within itself. The limitation may change as the thing changes, but a limitation of some kind will always be an intrinsic feature of the thing. This is true of all things, insofar as they are finite – whether they be inanimate objects, living things or human beings, or the institutions, states and artworks that humans produce.³¹

Whereas a limit is where something as a whole comes to an end, a limitation limits the intrinsic being, or “being-in-itself”, to which it belongs. Such a limitation does not, therefore, mark the point at which something is no longer there, but it belongs unambiguously to, and forms part of, what the thing *is*. In so doing, however, it prevents the thing from being what it is intrinsically. The limit of a field is where it stops and the wood begins, but the limitation of a field is some actual feature of it – maybe poor soil – that prevents it from being what it is supposed to be, from being what a field, indeed this field, *intrinsically* is.

Note that the idea that something is subject to a limitation implies that it is intrinsically *free* of the limitation afflicting it. A limitation can prevent something from being what it is in itself, only if, in itself, the thing is *not* limited in that way. Indeed, it is only the fact that something is *not* supposed to have a certain feature that turns that feature into a limitation. A limitation is thus not just a given property of an object; a property counts as a limitation only because the object is not supposed to have it. A field, for example, may be full of molehills. By itself, however, this does not count as a limitation of the field, but is simply the quality that makes it this field rather than that; indeed, perhaps the field is meant to be full of molehills, because it is being used for some kind of experiment. Only if it is *not* meant to be overrun by moles, does being so overrun constitute a limitation of the field. The idea of a limitation, therefore, is inseparable from the thought that the object it afflicts is intrinsically free of it.

Note also that a feature of a thing counts as a limitation only in comparison with what *that* thing is supposed to be, not in comparison with other things. The fact that one cannot swim in a field, whereas one can swim in a lake, is not a limitation of the field, because fields are not designed for swimming. Every thing falls short in some way of what other things are and can do; the absence of a quality counts as a limitation or deficiency, however, only if the object in question is meant to have it.³²

THE OUGHT OR SHOULD (SOLLEN)

When being-in-itself (*Ansichsein*) first emerges as a moment of something, it is understood to be the “*non-being* of being-for-other”; but it is such non-being, because it has withdrawn out of other-relatedness into its own *affirmative*

self-relation (SL 93 /LS 115). Being-in-itself is thus initially still a form of affirmative being. As a moment of the finite something, however, it now has a more explicitly negative character, for it is specifically the *negation* of the limitation that belongs to it (1: 219-20). In Hegel's words, "this being-in-itself" is "the negative relation to its limit (which is also distinguished from it)" (SL 104 / LS 129). The intrinsic being that sets itself apart from its limitation is thus not just affirmative being-in-itself as such, but being that consists in *not*-being-intrinsically-limited.

There is also a further sense in which the intrinsic being of a finite thing is no longer simple affirmative being: such intrinsic being necessarily *lacks* being and is not what the thing concerned actually *is*. The reason for this is easy to see. The thing's limitation belongs inseparably to its intrinsic *being*: it is an integral part of what the thing *is* (and this remains true even if the thing changes its intrinsic character and acquires a new limitation). The intrinsic "being" of the thing that sets itself apart from its limitation thus also sets itself apart from what the thing *is*, and so must lack being itself. To give an example: the field that is full of molehills (and that is not being used to rear moles) thereby has a limitation; this limitation, however, is a core part of what the field actually *is*; what the field is intrinsically – namely, a field free of molehills – is thus not what the field actually *is*, but simply the field without its limitation.

The intrinsic being that sets itself apart from the thing's limitation is thus doubly negative: it is the thing insofar as it is *not* subject to its limitation and so *not* what it actually *is*. Yet such intrinsic being is not just nothing. It is the logically necessary counterpart of any limitation: for a limitation cannot subsist on its own, but must be a limitation *of* something. The logic of finitude has thus led us to a profoundly contradictory form of being: a form of being that is intrinsic to the finite thing but that is not actually *being* at all. According to Hegel, what something is intrinsically, but is not as a matter of fact, is what that thing merely *should* be or *ought* to be. A limitation of a thing thus prevents it from being what, intrinsically, it should be.³³

This "should" or "ought" (*Sollen*) is not a moral ought, such as governs human action, but rather an ontological ought. It is a thing's own intrinsic being, which, however, has been deprived of being – prevented from being realized – by the limitation that is integral to the thing's being. As Hegel puts it, "what ought to be, *is*" – since it is not just nothing – "and at the same time *is not*" – since it only ought to be. "If it *were*", he continues, "it would not be what merely *ought to be*" (SL 104 / LS 130).

The finite thing thus proves to be a profoundly negative entity that consists, and has its being, principally in negation. On the one hand, the limitation that is intrinsic to the thing prevents the latter from being what it is intrinsically and so is the *negation* of the thing's intrinsic being. On the other hand, that intrinsic being, which is kept from being realized by the thing's limitation, thereby lacks

being of its own and consists only in the *negation* of the limitation: it is the thing insofar as it is not subject to its limitation. The finite thing, as the relation between what it should be and its limitation, is thus explicitly the *negation of negation*.

Something, as it first arises in the *Logic*, is determinate being or negation that is not mere negation because it is self-relating being. As such, it is “in the form of *being* [*seiend*] as the negation of negation” (SL 89 / LS 110). The finite thing, by contrast, is the negation of negation in the form of *negation*, since the two sides that constitute it are both principally the negation of one another. One side, namely the limitation, is explicitly negative, since it is a further form of the limit, which is itself the non-being of a thing. The other side, namely the ought, is also negative – Hegel calls it the “negative being-in-itself” (*das negative Ansichsein*) – since it is the thing insofar as it is not subject to its limitation (SL 104 / LS 129). Yet the ought is less overtly negative than the limitation, for it is the thing’s intrinsic *being* – albeit deprived of being by the very limitation to which it is opposed.³⁴

THE OUGHT AND LIMITATION AS TWO FORMS OF LIMITATION

Hegel’s account of the limitation and the ought is difficult, even by the demanding standards of his *Logic*, and it is easy to get lost amid the various negations and contradictions. It is worthwhile, therefore, briefly reviewing the differences between the limit, finitude as such, and the limitation.

The limit (*Grenze*) is that through which something is the thing it is – *this* thing – but it is itself the non-being of the thing or where the latter stops. The thing’s *being* or *Dasein* thus lies “calmly, indifferently, *alongside* [*neben*] its limit, as it were” (SL 104 / LS 129). The finite thing, by contrast, is a restless, dynamic entity that impels itself beyond its being to its own non-being, or, in other words, that brings itself to an end. Indeed, such a thing *is* the process of its own ending, just as for Schopenhauer human existence is “a constant dying”.³⁵

Insofar as the finite thing is in being and has not yet reached its end, however, it consists principally in the relation between its intrinsic limitation and its intrinsic being. Unlike the limit of a thing, a limitation (*Schranke*) is not just where something *stops*, but it belongs unambiguously to what something *is*, to what it is intrinsically: it is the non-being in something that at the same time “retains determinate being [*Dasein*] in it” (SL 103 / LS 129). It is thus a more complex fusion of being and non-being than the simple limit.

Similarly, the being that is limited by a limitation differs from that limited by the limit. First, such being is not straightforwardly affirmative, but is the intrinsic being of the thing that has been deprived of being by the limitation. As such, it is not what the thing *is*, apart from its limit, but merely what it *should*

be. Second, what something should be does not rest calmly alongside its limitation, but asserts itself against, and thereby negates, that limitation. A limited (but not yet finite) thing rests calmly next to its limit, because it *has* a determinate identity thanks to that limit. A limitation, however, is a limit that *prevents* the thing from being what it should be, and so is one that the thing, intrinsically, should *not* have. What the thing should be thus asserts itself against its limitation by pointing beyond, or *transcending*, the latter, declaring itself to be intrinsically free of that limitation.³⁶ The limitation, however, is itself an intrinsic feature of the thing; in “oughting” to be more than its limitation, therefore, “something thereby *transcends itself*” (SL 104 / LS 129). The finite thing thus goes beyond itself in two ways: as *finite*, it passes beyond its being into its non-being; and, as burdened with a *limitation*, it points beyond the non-being or deficiency that is intrinsic to it to the being that it should have but does not.

In pointing beyond itself, and so not just being what it is, the finite thing is a standing contradiction. Hegel points out that this contradiction goes to the very heart of the thing, for its intrinsic being – what it is *in itself* – is itself divided against itself. On the one hand, that intrinsic being stands in contrast to the thing’s limitation and is what the thing should be; on the other hand, that intrinsic being also contains the limitation that prevents the thing from being what it should be. The intrinsic being or determination (*Bestimmung*) of the thing thus takes a “double” form and is at odds with itself.³⁷

The contradiction in the finite thing is, however, even more all-encompassing than this, for the thing’s limitation also takes a double form. On the one hand, the limitation keeps the thing from being what it should be; on the other hand, however, the very fact that the thing only should be free of limitation, but is not, is itself a limitation. This second limitation, which belongs to what merely should be, consists in the latter’s lack of being, in its only oughting-to-be (even though it is the thing’s intrinsic *being*, or *Ansichsein*). This lack of being is in turn reflected in the fact that the ought cannot stand alone, but is precisely the “*non-being*”, or limit, of the thing’s explicit limitation.³⁸ The ought thus has its own limitation in being merely the limit of the limitation inherent in the thing: the point at which that limitation ends. *Both* sides of the finite thing are, therefore, “limited” (*beschränkt*) in the sense of being or having a limitation. The difference between them is simply that, in the case of the ought, “its limitation is enveloped [*eingehüllt*] in the in-itself” and so is implicit rather than explicit (SL 104 / LS 129).

The ought and the limitation, in Hegel’s view, are logically opposed to one another; yet they are also inextricably bound together. Because of its intrinsic limitation, the thing is not, but only ought to be, what it is intrinsically; conversely, it has that intrinsic limitation precisely because it only ought to be what it is intrinsically. In addition, the very fact *that* it only ought to be what it

is intrinsically is *itself* a limitation. In Hegel's words, "the limitation of the finite is not anything external, but the finite's own determination is also its limitation; and this limitation is both itself and the ought; it is that which is common to both, or rather that in which the two are identical" (SL 105 / LS 130).

Yet the finite thing is not simply reducible to limitation, for what a thing should be also *transcends* the limitation that defines it. Logically, this moment of transcendence is inseparable from the idea of limitation. A given feature of a thing counts as a limitation only insofar as it prevents the thing from being what it is intrinsically; what it is intrinsically must, therefore, be free from, and so lie *beyond*, that limitation. A limitation is thus a rather peculiar kind of limit, for it restricts the thing's intrinsic being, and yet does not restrict it since the latter transcends the limitation. A simple qualitative limit (*Grenze*) marks the point at which a thing ends, and in that respect it is unambiguous: a thing does not extend beyond such a limit. (So if it is taken beyond its limit by changes that it undergoes, it ceases to be itself and becomes an altogether different thing.). A limitation (*Schranke*), by contrast, is not unambiguous, because the thing is both limited by it *and* not limited by it (at least, intrinsically). Accordingly, in the case of a finite thing with a limitation "its limit is also not its limit" (SL 105 / LS 130). This limit is clearly contradictory, but it is an unavoidable moment of any finite thing. (Furthermore, as we shall see, the idea of a limit that is not a limit plays a crucial role in the sphere of quantity [see e.g. 1: 293-4].)

Having said all this, the fact that something transcends, or overcomes, its limitation only by virtue of what it should be (rather than what it is) is itself a *limitation* of the thing. The finite thing is thus doubly limited (as noted above): it is subject to its intrinsic limitation *and* it transcends the latter in a limited way (namely, only through its "ought").³⁹ It is true that "as ought, something is thus *elevated above its limitation*"; yet "conversely it has its *limitation* only as *ought*" (SL 105 / LS 130). In Hegel's view, therefore, a thing that ought, but only ought, to be free of limitation remains firmly mired in the latter, just as a human will that knows only that it ought to be good (rather than that it is good) is also a finite, limited will (see SL 107-8 / LS 133-4).⁴⁰

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Finite and the Infinite

FROM FINITUDE TO INFINITY

Finite being is being that *ceases* to be. According to Hegel, however, such being must give rise, logically, to infinite being. If it is to be consistently what it is, it must cease being mere ceasing to be and become *unceasing, infinite* being. We must now consider in more detail how and why this occurs.

As we have seen, the finite – in its being, before it ends (1: 217–18) – proves to be the complex relation between its intrinsic limitation and what it should be. Each of these two moments of the finite is *negative*: the limitation prevents the thing from being what it should be and so negates the latter, and what the thing should be transcends, and thereby negates, its limitation (see SL 108 / LS 134). The finite consists, therefore, in the relation between a negation and another negation. The finite is still *something* and as such has an affirmative character: it is a self-relating entity in relation to other such entities. Insofar as it is a *finite* something, however, its being lies explicitly in the negation of negation. Moreover, since this double negation constitutes what it is to *be* finite, we can say that the finite is the negation of negation in a further sense: for the finite, as a form of *being*, consists in being negative, yet *not just negative*.

The finite, however, is not only doubly negative within itself, but it also passes from being *into* non-being and so comes to an *end*. This process of ending, as Hegel understands it, is irreversible. Finite things that cease to be do not then spring back into being: they are, and then they are no more and never more shall be. Their passing results in unambiguous non-being or “the negative as such”.

Yet Hegel points out that what results from the passing away of the finite thing is not just nothing; as we saw at the start of the *Logic*, there can be no pure nothing, for pure nothing vanishes into being and thereby proves to be becoming (and determinate being and so on).¹ What results from the passing

away of the finite is thus a negative that is not *purely* negative, and so is not unambiguous after all. As such, Hegel writes, it is “the negative of the negative” (SL 108 / LS 134).²

The result of the finite’s passing is also the negative of the negative in another sense, since it is the negative of the finite, which is itself negative. As we have just seen, however, being that consists explicitly in the negative of the negative – or the “negation of negation” – is, precisely, *finite* being. When a finite thing ceases to be, therefore, what results is not just nothing but finite being once again. Something finite ceases to be and is no more; in so doing, however, it gives rise to a new finite thing. This then also ceases to be and gives rise to a new finite thing, and so on. In Hegel’s own words:

The finite is thus in itself the contradiction of itself; it sublates itself, ceases to be [*vergeht*]. But this, its result, the negative as such, is (α) its very *determination* [*Bestimmung*]; for it is the negative of the negative. Thus, in ceasing to be, the finite has not ceased to be; it has become in the first instance [*zunächst*] only *another* finite which, however, is equally a ceasing-to-be as the transition into another finite.

—SL 108 / LS 134³

This is not to deny that the finite ends. Such ending is constitutive of being finite, and is unavoidable. Equally, however, the finite does not just end, for *in* ending it becomes *another* finite being. The relation between being finite and changing, or becoming-other, is thus not as straightforward as it first appears. On the one hand, the process of ending is, indeed, distinct from that of change, because things that end do not just become other than they are but pass from being into *non-being*. On the other hand, however, the process of ending turns out to be a process of change after all, for ceasing to be one thing means becoming something else.

This process produces the first form of logically necessary infinity in the *Logic*: for one finite thing becomes another, which becomes another and another, and so on without end or “to *infinity*” (*ins Unendliche*). Note, however, that there is no clear qualitative difference between this first form of infinity and finitude, because such infinity consists merely *in* endless finitude, in an endless series of things that come to their end. This first infinity is thus merely finite being again and again. Implicit in this endless finitude, however, is a second form of infinity that is qualitatively different from finitude and so properly infinite.

To understand how this second form of infinity arises, we need to recognize that what the finite thing is intrinsically, or *in itself* (*an sich*), can be conceived in two ways. On the one hand, it is what the thing *should* be, and would be were it not for the limitation it has. On the other hand, however, the finite

thing is also intrinsically *non-being*. This latter point is the one Hegel highlights in his opening remarks about finitude: finite things are, but at the same time “non-being constitutes their nature, their being” (SL 101 / LS 126). This does not mean that they do not exist after all. Finite things are what there *is*; in their very being, however, they are implicitly and intrinsically non-being. They *are*, but they are born *not* to be, or, as Hegel puts it, “the hour of their birth is the hour of their death”.

Viewed in this light, the ending of a finite thing – its passing from being into non-being – is not simply its ending. It is also the process in which the thing *realizes* its intrinsic nature. In Hegel’s words, “in its ceasing-to-be, in this negation of itself, the finite has attained its being-in-itself [*sein Ansichsein erreicht*]” (SL 108 / LS 134). To put this another way, in ceasing to be, the finite thing finally comes to *be* what it is intrinsically. It comes to be truly itself and so, as Hegel puts it, “has thereby *gone together with itself*” (*ist darin mit sich selbst zusammengegangen*).⁴ Hegel’s argument at this point may strike some as a logical sleight of hand. Surely, when something ceases to be, it passes from being into non-being, and that’s it; there is no sense in which it thereby comes to *be* itself. In the case of a finite thing, however, non-being is not just the opposite of being; rather, it belongs to the very being of the thing. It is what the thing is intrinsically and thus what it is supposed to *be*. In ceasing to be, therefore, the finite thing not only passes out of being, but in so doing it fulfils its intrinsic nature and comes to be explicitly what it is implicitly, namely non-being.

Now as we have seen, when a finite thing ends, it does not just result in nothing, but it becomes another finite thing. This second thing is something altogether new and different. It is wholly other than the first thing, for it is what arises when the latter is no longer. Indeed, the second thing is simply what it is for the first thing *not* to be. Yet this cannot be the whole story: for we have also just seen that, in ceasing to be and becoming something else, the first thing realizes its own intrinsic nature. Logically, therefore, the second thing must *be* the realization of that nature: it must *be* the first thing insofar as it has realized itself, has come to be explicitly what it is intrinsically. In other words, the second thing must be the first thing *as* the non-being it is born to be, the first thing *as* no longer itself. This is not to deny that the second thing is different from the first. Yet it is not simply different, since it is what the first thing itself proves to be as it comes to be properly itself, as it comes to *be* the non-being it is intrinsically. The second thing, therefore, is what the first thing, in ending, *itself* becomes. It is the continuation of the first thing – the first thing itself in a new form.⁵

When Abraham sacrifices the ram, the latter is reduced to ash. As a finite thing, however, the ram is born to die, to pass into non-being. That means that it is born to become, and so is intrinsically, something else, such as ash (or an equivalent). The ash is thus not simply other than the ram, but is the realization

of the latter's intrinsic nature: it is what the ram itself has become. In the other that it becomes, therefore, the ram "goes together with itself" and so continues to be, albeit in a completely new form. In this way, by continuing beyond its own demise, it constitutes *unending* – *infinite* – being. This is the second form of infinity to which finitude gives rise.

According to Hegel, therefore, when a finite thing ends, it does not just vanish into nothingness, but it is changed into an altogether different form of itself. At this point Hegel comes close to Leibniz who maintained, in his correspondence with Antoine Arnauld, that "all generation of animals is only the transformation of an already living animal" and that "there are also grounds to believe that death is nothing but a further transformation".⁶ For Leibniz, too, the ashes left when Abraham burned a ram are not utterly distinct from the ram itself, but are the latter in a new, reduced form.

There is, however, a significant difference between Leibniz and Hegel. For Leibniz, the ram is not only transformed into ashes, but it remains present as an – albeit miniscule – *ram* in those ashes. This is because "fire can only transform an animal and reduce it to something very small, rather than destroying it altogether". In Leibniz's view, therefore, no animal actually *ceases* being what it is, but "corruption or death is nothing but a diminution and encapsulation of an animal which nevertheless still subsists and remains living and organized".⁷ Hegel, by contrast, takes the finitude of things more seriously than this: for him, finite things *end* and do *not* remain what they are. In ending, however, they do not just vanish, but become something else. From the Hegelian point of view, therefore, the ram is not preserved *as a ram* in the ashes; nonetheless, the ashes are what the ram in dying has itself become.

Since each finite thing *continues*, albeit in a radically different form, in the other that it becomes, it does not merely belong to a succession of different things. It also belongs to a single, continuous flow of being. Such being is unending and infinite precisely because it continues and does not end, as one finite thing mutates into another. This second form of infinite being does not, therefore, just consist in endless finitude, in one finite becoming another and so on. It is being that *remains* – or, more precisely, that *comes* to remain – in and through the passing away of finite things. As such, this second infinity is qualitatively different from finitude: the finite necessarily ceases to be, whereas infinite being does not cease to be but is unending.

Such infinity, however, is not altogether separate from finitude; it is the being that continues without end *in* the sphere of finitude. At this stage in the *Logic*, the sphere of finitude is all that there is. It comprises the endless succession of finite things that pass away and become other things – the first infinity. Yet at the same time it forms a continuity of unending, infinite being – the second infinity. The one sphere of finitude is thus infinite in two different senses. Conversely, both kinds of infinity are inseparable from finitude, and from one another.

It is especially important to bear this in mind when considering the second infinity. As already noted, this infinity is qualitatively different from finite being; indeed, it is “the negation of the finite” – *un*-ending, *in*-finite being (SL 108-9 / LS 135). Yet such infinity lives and has its being thanks only *to* the finite. Only because one finite thing continues beyond itself in another is there continuous, unending being. Infinite being in the second sense is thus simply being that, *in* the ending of finite things, *does not end*. It is being that constantly unites with itself and preserves its “*identity with itself*”, as finite things pass away (SL 108 / LS 134). Without finite being, therefore, there could be no infinite being. (The process of mere change alone, as we encountered it earlier, does not, therefore, constitute infinite being, since it does not involve being’s *not* ending as things *end*.)

It is important to note, by the way, that the second infinity is not to be confused with the later categories of ground or substance, which are examined in the doctrine of essence. Substance is, indeed, a further form of this infinity, but its logical structure is more complex than that of infinity as such. Infinity does not underlie being (like the ground), or produce being through its own necessity (like substance). It is simply a *quality* of being that is distinct from finite being: being that does not end, when finite being does.⁸

Insofar as infinite being is *not* finite being, it is – like the finite – the “negation of negation” (SL 108 / LS 134). Unlike the finite, however, it is explicitly *affirmative* self-relating, self-identical being, rather than explicitly negative. It is also being that is without limitation or limit (since it does not end). Indeed, it is not reducible to any of the categories of *Dasein* that we have encountered so far. This means that infinite being is not “something” in relation to “something else”. Yet nor is it sheer, indeterminate being. It is being that, as Hegel puts it, “has restored itself out of limitedness [*Beschränktheit*]”, being that relates solely to itself in the passing away of limited, finite things (SL 109 / LS 136).

THE “BAD” INFINITE

Hegel insists that it is not just *we* who, “as subjective reason, pass beyond the finite into the infinite”. The truth is, rather, “that the finite is only this, through its nature to become itself the infinite” (SL 109-10 / LS 136). The finite, in its sheer finitude, turns into continuous, unending, infinite being.⁹

Such infinite being is thus inseparable from finitude. Yet it is also qualitatively *different* from finite being. Previous categories, such as reality and negation, or determination and constitution, also differ qualitatively from one another: the one *is* what the other *is not*. In so doing, they stand in direct relation to, and coexist with, their opposites, and, as such, each is a one-sided, limited determination. Infinity, however, is not one-sided and limited, because being limited belongs to being finite, and infinite being by definition is *not finite*.

Infinite being, therefore, is not bounded or accompanied by anything else: it is not the other of an other. Its distinctive quality – which distinguishes it from finite being – is thus that it stands all alone as simple infinity. This explains the somewhat surprising remark that Hegel makes at the end of 1.1.2.C.a: finite being turns of its own accord into infinite being, yet in so doing it *vanishes* and “what *is*, is only the *infinite*” (SL 110 / LS 136). In proving to be infinite being, therefore, finite being ceases altogether to be finite and, as such, disappears from view. Being thus turns out in truth to be nothing but simple infinite being – being that is wholly self-relating and affirmative. Such being is what we might call “immediate” infinity. This infinity is co-extensive with finitude, but with finitude that itself proves to be pure unending, *infinite* being.

Yet this is not the whole story, for infinite being is distinguished from the pure being we encountered at the start of the *Logic* by the fact that it is negative, rather than just affirmative – the fact that it is *un*-ending being, or being-that-is-not-finite. This moment of not-being-finite belongs essentially and explicitly to infinity, and without it the latter would collapse back into pure, indeterminate being. As we shall see, the infinite continues to differ from, and so not to be, the finite throughout its logical development. In its initial immediacy, however, the infinite is *not*-the-finite in a quite immediate way. It is thus the simple, immediate “negation” (*Negation*) of the finite (SL 110 / LS 137). When this moment of negation is rendered explicit, it immediately confers on the infinite a form that, as infinite, it is not supposed to have: that of being an “other”. This does not mean that there is now, after all, no continuous, unending being that is co-extensive with finitude, but only infinite being that is *other* than the latter. Such continuous, unending being remains a necessary form of infinity; but infinity must also take the form of an “other” when the moment of negation in it is given its proper due.

As we saw earlier, simple negation is a form – with reality – of determinate being (*Dasein*). Determinate being then proves to be *something* (*Etwas*) in relation to something else; indeed, it proves to be something that is the limit of something else. In being the explicit negation of the finite, therefore, the infinite itself becomes something other than, and the limit of, the finite. As such, it must confront a sphere of finitude that is in turn other than it (for every something is other than *another* something).¹⁰ This means, however, that the finite cannot now simply vanish in the infinite: if the latter is something other than the finite, the finite must also *be* something other than the infinite. As Hegel puts it, therefore, “the *immediate being* of the infinite resurrects the *being* of its negation, of the finite again, which at first seemed to have vanished in the infinite” (SL 110 / LS 137). The infinite thus proves not to be simply infinite after all, but (in its new form) to be inseparably bound to the finite, from which it differs and which is itself other than the infinite. In the process the finite itself also undergoes a subtle modification.

Being finite follows logically from being limited, but it also differs from the latter: to be limited is to be bounded by something else, whereas to be finite is to cease to be altogether (through simply being oneself). It is this feature of finitude that brings about the transition to infinity: for, in its ceasing to be, the finite ceases to be *mere* ceasing to be and becomes *unceasing*, continuous, infinite being (by “going together with itself” in the new finite that it becomes). As Hegel puts it, therefore, “it is the very nature of the finite to transcend itself [. . .] and become infinite” (SL 109 / LS 136). Once the finite turns out to be something other than the infinite, however, its character changes. Insofar as it is an *other*, Hegel argues, the finite is “*real*” (*reales*) and “subsistent” (*bestehendes*) determinate being (SL 110, 112 / LS 137, 139). As real and subsistent, however, it is no longer just being that *ceases* to be. This in turn means that it is no longer just that which, in its ceasing to be, becomes infinite. In what other sense, then, is the finite, conceived as something other than the infinite, still *finite* (rather than a mere something)? It is finite by virtue of being *limited*. Now it is true that being limited is not the same as being finite in the latter’s initial sense. Nonetheless, it brings something to a stop and so prevents it from being unending, infinite being; in that sense being limited renders a thing finite. Being finite in this sense, however, is not just being limited *tout court*, but being limited *and so not being infinite*. This leads to a further significant aspect of being finite in the new sense: the latter consists in having a limit that points beyond itself, and beyond the finite, *to the infinite* that transcends the finite.

Note that this second conception of finitude coexists with, and does not replace, the first. The finite thus now has a dual status. On the one hand, it is simply finite – the process of ceasing to be – and so passes over into, or becomes, infinite being in the way we have described. On the other hand, it is real *Dasein* that is *other* than the infinite and that “persists [*verbleibt*] even as transition is made to its non-being, to the infinite” (SL 111 / LS 138). As such, it does not become, but rather points beyond itself to, the infinite. These two conceptions of finitude are reflected in the language Hegel uses to describe the relation between the finite and the infinite. Hegel maintains both that the finite has “the determination [. . .] to *become* infinite” (SL 110 / LS 137) *and* – using a passive construction – that the finite is transcended *by* the infinite.¹¹ It is important to note that both statements are true: the finite passes over, through its own nature, *into* infinite being; yet, insofar as the infinite and finite are *other* than one another, the latter also points *to* and is transcended *by* the former.

The finite thus stands in two subtly different relations to infinity. Yet the second does not cancel the first but preserves it – indeed, preserves it as a moment of itself – since both belong to what it is to be *finite*. In being other than the infinite, therefore, the finite is not just something *other* than the latter, but it is *finite* in the two senses just outlined. Hence Hegel’s claim, quoted

above, that the finite in the second sense persists “*even as [auch indem] transition is made to [. . .] the infinite*” (SL 111 / LS 138, emphasis added).

The infinite, similarly, is not just other than the finite, but is, precisely, *infinite* in being other. It must, therefore, retain its character as infinite, even as it proves to be other than the finite. As we saw above, the infinite “proper” – that is more than just endless finitude – is being in which there is no longer any finitude as such, in which the finite has vanished. This must still be the case when the infinite is other than the finite: the infinite, as *infinite*, must still be where the finite *is no more*. This means, in Hegel’s words, that the infinite, in being other than the finite, must be “the nothing of the finite” (*das Nichts des Endlichen*) (SL 110 / LS 137).

Yet such “nothingness” cannot be all there is to the infinite, for the latter is here something *other* than the finite and the finite in turn is something *other* than the infinite. The infinite is thus not only the “nothing” in which the finite vanishes, but also the other that *preserves* the finite, as its other, over against it.

In the pages of Hegel’s text that we have just been considering, the logical relation between the infinite and the finite has thus undergone a subtle shift. First of all, at the end of 1.1.2.C.a, we learn that the finite vanishes in the infinite. At this point, all there is, is the infinite, which is simple affirmative being. Then, at the start of 1.1.2.C.b., we learn that the finite does not simply vanish after all, since it is “resurrected” by the infinite (when the moment of negation in the latter is rendered explicit). Yet, although the finite now stands over against the infinite and so has not vanished, it still vanishes in the infinite *itself*, since the latter is precisely that being in which the finite is no more. The finite continues to vanish in the infinite, therefore; but the infinite in which it vanishes no longer stands alone but now confronts a sphere of finitude *that is still there*.

Note that the logical relation between the finite and the infinite changes as the infinite itself changes and proves to be other than the finite. There is, however, more to be said about this new form of the infinite. At the end of 1.1.2.C.a. the infinite is wholly self-relating affirmative being, because at that point it is all that there is. Now, by contrast, the infinite is not just all that there is, but stands in relation to a realm of determinate, finite things. Furthermore, this realm of finite things is now understood to have “real” being, to be “the sphere of affirmative [*seiend*] determinacies, of realities” (SL 110 / LS 138). Since real, affirmative being is to be found in the *finite*, and the infinite is qualitatively different from the finite, the infinite is no longer wholly affirmative itself but the explicit *negation* or *non-being* of the reality it confronts. As such, it is to be understood, not just as the infinite, but as “being in the determinacy of negation”, that is, as “the *non-finite*” (*das Nicht-Endliche*) (emphasis added). This “non-finite” is the “nothing of the finite”, mentioned above, now conceived not only as the sheer absence of the finite, but also explicitly as *other* than, and the determinate *negation* and *limit* of, the finite. Since this infinite is the

“nothing” in which all finitude and determinacy have vanished, it must itself be *indeterminate*: it must be the utterly indeterminate determinate negation of the finite. Accordingly, as Hegel puts it, the infinite, understood as other than the finite, is “the indeterminate void” (*das unbestimmte Leere*) that is the mere “beyond of the finite” (SL 110-11 / LS 138). It is simply the empty logical space in which there is no longer any finite being.

The infinite, conceived in this way, as wholly other than and beyond the finite, is what Hegel calls “the *bad infinite*” (*das Schlecht-Unendliche*). This infinite is bad, not because it is somehow morally suspect, but because it is not actually infinite. Infinite being is being that is not finite, but unending. The bad infinite, however, is “the *limit* of the finite” and so – in its indeterminate emptiness – is “an *infinite that is itself finite*” (SL 111 / LS 138). Note that the bad infinite is “finite”, not in the initial sense of the word, but in the second sense that has now emerged. The bad infinite does not, therefore, cease to be, or die like an animal. It is finite in the sense of being *limited* (and, as we shall see, in the sense of being transcended by a further infinite). The infinite is finite only in this second sense, because it is not *purely* finite, but finite by virtue of being other than, and the limit of, the finite itself. Note also that the bad infinite is bad, not because it falls short of a true infinite that is yet to emerge, but because it is not what the infinite has already shown itself to be: simple self-relating, unending being. In deeming the bad infinite to be bad, therefore, Hegel is not illegitimately anticipating a “good” and true infinite that has yet to be derived. The concept of the bad infinite thus provides no support for Schelling’s claim that what always “tacitly leads” the progression in Hegelian logic is the “*terminus ad quem*” (HMP 138 / AS 4: 548).

Here we encounter one of Hegel’s most famous and, for many, most compelling arguments: the infinite, conceived as other than and the limit of finitude, is itself a *finite* infinite.¹² Moreover, the infinite is rendered finite, even when (as at this point in the text) it is conceived as a wholly indeterminate beyond, for it is still thought of as starting where the finite stops and thus, by implication, as stopping where the finite starts. In Hegel’s view, indeed, *any* infinite that is understood as transcending the finite, in however subtle a manner, is ultimately a finite, limited – and therefore inadequate – infinite, whether it is conceived by philosophy, religion or ordinary understanding.¹³

Hegel calls the bad infinite “the infinite of the *understanding*” (SL 111 / LS 138). Yet the understanding is not the source of the bad infinite (nor, indeed, *pace* Michael Theunissen, is “representation”).¹⁴ The understanding merely latches on to a “bad” conception of the infinite that is inherent in thought (and being) itself. Although the bad infinite is a finite – and therefore not an infinite – infinite, it is what the infinite itself proves to be. It is thus a necessary category of thought and, indeed – since speculative logic is ontology – a necessary way of being. This latter point is important. As we shall see, true infinity does not

transcend the finite, but is the process in which the finite is a moment (see 1: 244–5). Nonetheless, the bad infinite is not simply a fiction, but it belongs to what there is. It is encountered most clearly in human consciousness, and especially in the consciousness of being an “I”: for the latter, according to Hegel, is the “*infinite* relation of spirit [*Geist*] to itself”, but it also stands over against the things of the world.¹⁵ The structure of the bad infinite is also to be found in the unhappy consciousness analysed in the *Phenomenology*. Such a consciousness is unhappy, because it feels mired in its finite individuality and thus separated and alienated from its own “unchangeable” identity, which it locates in an unchangeable being beyond it. Hegel shows that such unhappiness leads, logically, to the relative happiness of reason (*Vernunft*); nevertheless, such unhappiness is not simply a fiction and many people’s lives are characterized by it. In this sense, too, therefore, the bad infinite is a reality in the world, even though it is an inadequate and insufficiently *infinite* infinite.¹⁶

THE PROGRESS TO INFINITY

In its initial immediacy, the infinite is first of all just itself, but it then proves to be the explicit negation of, and so *other* than, the finite. As such, however, it necessarily preserves the finite as that which is other than it. The understanding takes up this conception of the infinite and considers it to be the ultimate truth. Accordingly, as the understanding passes from the finite to the infinite, the finite *remains* for it “on this side” in contrast to the infinite which is placed above or beyond the finite.

Hegel points out, however, that the finite and the infinite are not just “separated” (*abgesondert*) from one another in this way, but are *bound together* by a common limit – the point at which one stops and the other begins (SL 111 / LS 139). Yet this limit does not fall between them, as in the case of something and its other, but belongs to each one separately. In their very separateness, therefore, the finite and the infinite are connected by the common limit that each contains.

When finitude first emerges, the finite is wholly self-negating being without reference to the infinite at all (1: 212–13). Once the infinite has arisen, however, the finite turns into that which is *not*-the-infinite and so is the limit of the latter. Similarly, the infinite is in itself *not*-the-finite and so is the limit of the finite. Each, therefore, is *not*-the-other and so is inextricably tied to that other. Yet, Hegel points out, each one also “repels” the other, and holds it at bay, as utterly other than it, as qualitatively quite distinct.¹⁷ This is because the infinite as such contains no trace whatsoever of finitude (which vanishes in it), and so the latter correspondingly contains no trace of the former. In this sense, the two are quite separate from one another. This separateness, however, does not cancel the inextricable connection between them to which we have just referred: for in

being separate from the other, each is *not* the other and so is tied to it. Equally, their interconnection through negation does not cancel their separateness. They must therefore be connected *in* their separateness, which is to say that the moment of non-being, or the limit, connecting the two as not-one-another, belongs *separately* to each: “each thus has for itself, in its separation from the other, the limit in it” that connects it to the other (SL 111 / LS 139).

To recapitulate: the finite and the infinite are *separate* from one another, since the infinite lies wholly beyond the finite; yet they are equally bound together in their separateness as *not*-one-another; yet in not being one another, they exclude one another and so are, indeed, quite separate. The relation between the finite and the infinite is thus a contradictory one. This contradiction stems from the distinctive character of the infinite: for the infinite is not-finite in two opposing senses. On the one hand, as *infinite* it lacks all finitude, limitation and one-sidedness and is purely self-relating being; but, on the other hand, as *in-finite*, it is the limit of the finite, is bound to the finite and so is finite itself. The tension between these two thoughts is what pulls the infinite and the finite in two different directions at the same time.

The finite and the infinite do not, however, stand in a purely static relation to one another, but (as we know) the finite passes over, of its own accord, into infinite being. This dynamic transition must now be thought together with the contradiction set out in the previous paragraphs: for – as we noted above (1: 233–4) – the passing of the finite *into* the infinite is preserved, not simply cancelled, in the idea that the former is *other* than the latter. This yields the following thought: the finite “dissolves itself” *into* infinite being that proves both to be the immediate negation of the finite and to lack finitude altogether. That is to say, the finite turns into infinite (or in-finite) being, from which it is completely excluded, and so it flips over into its utter opposite.

It is readily conceded that the finite passes over into the infinite necessarily (that is, through its determination) and is thereby elevated to its being-in-itself, for while the finite is indeed determined as subsistent determinate being, it is at the same time *also* null *in itself* [*das an sich Nichtige*] and therefore *destined to self-dissolution*; whereas the infinite, although burdened with negation and limit, is equally also determined as the being-in-itself [*das Ansichseiende*], so that this abstraction of self-relating affirmation is what constitutes its determination, and *hence finite determinate being is not present in it*.

—SL 112 / LS 139, emphasis added

A similar dialectic besets the infinite. The infinite, as it is here conceived, is the simple negation and limit of the finite, and thereby immediately becomes something finite itself. Finitude, however, is completely excluded by the infinite and so excludes the latter in turn: finitude (as it is conceived here) is where

there is *no* infinity. Like the finite, therefore, the infinite turns into that which excludes it and so flips over into its utter opposite.¹⁸

It turns out, therefore, that the relation between the finite and the infinite is not exhausted by the idea of the bad infinite. Not only does the infinite lie *beyond* the finite, but both the finite and the infinite are the immediate “flipping over or transition” (*Umschlagen oder Übergehen*) into their polar opposite (SL 112 / LS 140). What becomes explicit in this transition is the fact that, though quite separate from one another, the finite and the infinite are also “*inseparable*” (*untrennbar*) from and *united* with one another. As we shall see, that – unity will become deeper, and take a different form, as the true character of infinity emerges. At this point, however, the unity of the finite and the infinite, like that of being and nothing in becoming, takes the form of the restless transition of the one into the other – the transition of each into the quite separate identity of the other. This dynamism inherent in finitude and infinity initially appears just to take us back and forth from one category to the other. Hegel now points out, however, that the transition of the one into the other actually generates a *linear* progression.¹⁹ It is easy to see why this is the case.

The finite first passes over *into* its opposite, infinite being; or, equally, as other than the infinite, the finite points beyond itself *to* the infinite. The infinite in turn lies quite beyond the finite. As such, however, it is the negation of the finite and so is itself *finite*. As Hegel writes, therefore, “the infinite has vanished and its other, the finite, has entered. [. . .] And with this we are back at the previous determination, which has been sublated in vain” (SL 112 / LS 140). Now, as noted above, the infinite “beyond” is not finite in the initial sense and so does not simply cease to be or die. This finite infinite does, however, mirror the finite that it confronts in being *limited* and so *not infinite*. As such, it must also mirror that finite in another way: in being *finite*, it must point beyond itself and its limit to the *infinite* that transcends it. The finite infinite beyond the finite thus necessarily points to a further infinite beyond it. Yet this further infinite is also limited and finite, and so must point beyond itself to a further infinite, “*and so forth to infinity*”.

With this “*progress to infinity*” (SL 113 / LS 141), we appear to have returned to the sheer endlessness that characterized the first form of the infinite encountered in 1.1.2.B.c.γ. This latest form of infinity, however, differs subtly from that first one. The latter consists purely in endless *finitude*: one finite thing ceases to be and thereby mutates into another finite thing, which ceases to be, and so on. Such endlessness can thus be represented as follows:

$$F \rightarrow F \rightarrow F \rightarrow F \rightarrow \dots$$

The progress to infinity, by contrast, consists not just in endless finitude, but in what Hegel calls “the *alternating determination* [*Wechselbestimmung*] of the

finite and the infinite” (SL 112 / LS 140): the finite passes over into, or points to, *infinite* being; such infinite being lies beyond the finite and so is itself finite; as *finite*, however, this infinite points beyond itself to a further *infinite*; this infinite is in turn finite and so points beyond itself to a further infinite, and so on. This progress can thus be represented like this:

$$F \rightarrow I (F) \rightarrow I (F) \rightarrow I (F) \rightarrow \dots$$

The first endlessness is generated by the fact that in ending the finite becomes another finite. The progress to infinity, by contrast, has a twofold source. It is generated by the fact that (a) the finite, as “*real determinate being*” (SL 110 / LS 137), points to an infinite that lies *beyond* it, and (b) such an infinite is *itself* finite in this sense. The infinite, construed in this latter way, is the bad infinite. The progress to infinity is thus not an alternative to the bad infinite, but is generated by, and is a further form of, the bad infinite itself.²⁰ It is the “progress” that arises because the finite, “bad” infinite points beyond itself to a finite, “bad” infinite that points beyond itself . . . , and so on, *endlessly*. In that progress, therefore, the infinite *always* lies beyond the finite: it is always out of reach. This is the case because it is only ever the limit of the finite, and so is finite itself, rather than *infinite*. In other words, the infinite that generates the progress to infinity is one that only ever *ought* to be infinite but never actually is. As Hegel puts it, such an infinite is the “perpetual *ought*” that, in being the negation of the finite, can never free itself from the latter and be what it is (SL 113 / LS 141).

Hegel remarks that this endless progress (or regress) is often regarded “as an unsurpassable *ultimate*”: for many people, including in Hegel’s view Kant and Fichte, such endlessness is all that infinity is (SL 113, 131-2 / LS 141, 166). For Hegel, by contrast, such endlessness is not all that infinity is, but is the product of a specific – and abstract – way of conceiving of the infinite. It is generated by an infinite that “has the fixed determination of a *beyond* that cannot be attained, for the very reason that it is not supposed to be attained, because the determinacy of the beyond, of the *affirmative* [*seiend*] negation, is not let go [*abgelassen*]” (SL 113 / LS 142). These last words are significant, for they indicate how thought can advance to the category of the true infinite. The infinite must take the form of the bad infinite and the equally bad – that is, inadequately infinite – progress to infinity. Thought will remain limited to this endless progress, as long as it clings on to the idea that the infinite lies *beyond* the finite. If it is prepared to *let go* of this idea, however, thought will discover the nature of true – that is, explicitly *infinite* – infinity.

Before we consider Hegel’s account of the true infinite, however, let us briefly review the forms of infinity that have so far emerged. Note that these are all forms of qualitative infinity, rather than quantitative infinity, which will be considered later. They are simply qualities or ways of being: ways of being

infinite, rather than being determinate, being something, or being finite. So far we have encountered four such ways of being infinite. First, there is endless finitude. Second, there is unceasing, infinite being that is co-extensive with, but qualitatively distinct from, finitude (and in which finitude as such thus vanishes): what we might call “immediate” infinity. Third, the infinite takes the form of the “non-finite” or “*bad infinite*”. Fourth, there is the progress to infinity that we have just considered. This progress, Hegel writes, is “the perennial repetition of one and the same alternation” – the endless recurrence of the infinite that is other than and lies beyond the finite and so is never actually infinite but only ever finite. As such, we are told, it is “the same *tedious* [*langweilig*] alternation of this finite and infinite” (SL 113 / LS 141-2, emphasis added). We can thus call it the “tedious”, rather than simply “bad”, infinite.²¹

The fifth and final form of infinity is true infinity. Hegel insists, however, that we do not need to go beyond the tedious infinite to find it. (To do so, indeed, would just leave us with another bad infinite *beyond* the tedious one.) On the contrary, we simply have to render explicit what is implicit *in* that tedious infinite. In Hegel’s words, “in the alternating determination, just indicated, of the finite and the infinite from one to another and back again, their truth is already implicitly *present* [*an sich schon vorhanden*], and all that is needed is to take up what is there” in the progress to infinity itself (SL 114 / LS 142).

THE UNITY OF THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE

At the start of 1.1.2.C.c., however, Hegel does not proceed directly to examine what is implicit in that progress, as one would expect, but he first undertakes what he describes as an external “comparison” (*Vergleichung*) of the finite and the (bad) infinite in their “immediate determination”, that is, before the progress arises (SL 114, 116 / LS 142, 146). Hegel will not begin to unfold what is implicit in the infinite progress itself for another four pages (in the *Meiner* edition). What he presents before that point is certainly interesting; since it takes the form of a comparison, however, it should be regarded more as a Remark than as part of the continuing logical development of the category of the infinite.

Hegel notes first that comparing the finite and the infinite with one another shows them to form an indissoluble *unity* (*Einheit*). The infinite, he points out, is simply that which transcends the finite, and so is the “negation of the finite”; the finite, on the other hand, is simply that which points to, and passes over into, the infinite. Each, therefore, is united with the other insofar as it is inseparably *connected* to it, or, as Hegel writes, insofar as it contains “the *determinacy* of the *other*” (SL 114 / LS 142-3).

Hegel then notes that the finite and the infinite form a unity even when they are understood to be “*without connection*” (*beziehungslos*).²² Conceived

without this connection, they are still thought together as a pair, but neither is in itself explicitly bound to the other. They simply lie next to one another and, as Hegel puts it, are “joined only through an ‘and’”. Conceived in this way, the infinite is purely self-relating being; yet, since it forms a pair with the finite, it is also “*one of the two*”. As just *one* of the two, however, rather than the whole pair, it is one-sided and so “has its limit in that which stands over against it”. As such, of course, it is a “*finite* infinite”. The infinite, conceived as simply lying next to or beyond the finite, and so as finite itself, is thus necessarily united with finitude. In Hegel’s words, “it is precisely this holding of the infinite *apart* from the finite, thus giving it a *one-sided* character, that constitutes its finitude and, therefore, its unity with the finite” (SL 114 / LS 143).²³

The finite is subject to a similar dialectic. It is also one-sided, since it is also just one of two. Yet by itself or “for its part” (*für sich*), removed from the infinite, it is wholly self-relating being. As such, Hegel maintains, it is “the same self-subsistence and self-affirmation which the infinite is supposed to be” (SL 114 / LS 143). The finite taken by itself thus proves to be one with the infinite, just as the infinite is in itself one with the finite.

Whether the finite and infinite are understood in explicit relation *to* or as standing apart *from* one another, therefore, their comparison yields “the – infamous [*verrufen*] – unity of the finite and the infinite” (SL 115 / LS 144).²⁴ This unity, Hegel points out, is itself a new form of the infinite. It is not one side in relation to, or set apart from, another side, and so is no longer finite like the bad infinite; but it is “the infinite that embraces both itself and finitude”. So conceived, the infinite is now truly, rather than inadequately, infinite.

In this unity, Hegel notes, the finite and infinite do not remain simply opposed to one another, but “lose their qualitative nature” and so are “*negated*” (*Negierte*): as one with the other, each is no longer just *itself*-and-not-the-other (SL 115 / LS 144). This, he writes, is an “important reflection”. It is, however, overlooked by representation (*Vorstellung*), which “falsifies” (*verfälscht*) the unity by “holding on to the infinite and finite in the quality they are supposed to have when taken apart from each other”. For representation, therefore, the fact that the infinite and the finite form a unity makes no difference to the way they themselves are to be conceived. They retain in that unity the character they have outside it, and they are not in any way negated, or “sublated”, by forming such a unity. Hegel also criticizes the understanding (*Verstand*) for holding on to the “qualitative difference” (*qualitative Verschiedenheit*) between the finite and infinite (SL 116 / LS 145). Like representation, the understanding fails to see that even when they are set apart from one another – the finite here and the infinite over there – “each is in itself [*an ihm selbst*] this unity, and this only as a *sublating* [*Aufheben*] of itself” (as we have just seen).

For Hegel, then, comparison of the finite and the infinite shows that each proves to be the unity of itself and the other, and that in so doing each is

negated (SL 115 / LS 144). Hegel does not, however, spell out in further detail what being “negated” means here. The reason why is that he cannot do so: for the bare idea of the *unity* of the finite and the infinite is too indeterminate to reveal fully *how* the two are negated in it. As Hegel himself makes clear at the start of his comparison, “the *unity* of the infinite and the finite [. . .] is the wrong [*schief*] expression for the unity as it is in truth” (SL 114 / LS 142).²⁵ His external comparison of the finite and the infinite, which leads to the thought of such unity, does not, therefore, take us forward to a full comprehension of that unity and of true infinity. It takes us to the thought that there must be an infinite that unites the finite and the infinite within itself, and so is not just the bad infinite; but it then stops and yields nothing more.

Accordingly, Hegel now turns his attention back to the infinite progress. He first notes that “comparison” reveals the finite and the infinite to be “negated” (*negiert*) in that progression too (though also to be posited “one after the other” as distinct). He points out, however, that “the infinite progress expresses more than this”, and that “we now only need to see, in a simple reflection, what is in fact present in it” (SL 116-17 / LS 146). At this point, therefore, Hegel leaves external comparison of the finite and infinite behind and resumes the immanent examination of the infinite progress itself. As we shall see, study of what is immanent in the infinite progress discloses the unity of the finite and the infinite, just as their external comparison does. Now, however, we learn what such unity is in truth and precisely what it means for the finite and infinite to be “negated” in it.

In my view, by the way, since the material in the first ten paragraphs of 1.1.2.C.c is based on what Hegel himself calls an “external comparing” (*äußeres Vergleichen*), it can be skipped without detriment to one’s understanding of the logic of infinity (SL 116 / LS 146). My suggestion to readers would thus be to pass directly from SL 114 (l. 3) / LS 142 (l. 20) – “all that is needed is to take up what is there” – to SL 117 (ll. 2-3) / LS 146 (ll. 31-2) – “The infinite progression, however, says more than this”. In this way, attention will remain focussed on the immanent logical development that is the real subject of the *Logic*.

TRUE, OR AFFIRMATIVE, INFINITY

In the infinite progress, as we have seen, the finite, as real *Dasein*, first points to an infinite that lies beyond it; this infinite, as the limit of the finite, is, however, itself finite. In Hegel’s words, “the *finite* comes *first*; *then* there is the transcending of it, and this negative, or this beyond of the finite, is the infinite; *third*, this negation is transcended in turn, a new limit arises, a *finite* again” (SL 117 / LS 147). In pointing to, and being transcended by, the infinite, therefore, the finite does not just give way to something other than itself; rather, “what arises is *the*

same as the point of departure, that is, the finite is restored". The transcending of the finite thus proves to be the "complete, self-closing movement that has arrived at that which constituted the beginning". The finite points beyond itself, but "*in its beyond*" it has "*only found itself again*": it *continues* to be itself.

The same is true of the infinite. As infinite, it lies beyond the finite, but in so doing it renders itself finite. This finite, however, is once more transcended and negated by an infinite beyond. "Thus, what is present again is the *same* infinite that just now disappeared in the new limit". In being reduced to something finite and then being transcended, the infinite has thus, like the finite, "*arrived at itself*" (SL 117 / LS 147).

Note that the finite and the infinite do not extend beyond themselves from the start; rather, each *comes* to continue beyond itself. The finite comes to continue as it is transcended by its negation and this negation then proves to be the same as it. The infinite comes to continue as it reduces itself to its negation and then transcends the latter once again. As *coming* to continue, therefore, the finite and the infinite, in Hegel's words, are "this *movement* of each returning to itself through its negation" (SL 117 / LS 147). As such, neither remains purely itself, but each unites with itself thanks to the *other* that transcends it or that it becomes. More precisely, each unites with itself through the *negation* of that other: the finite through the infinite's not being infinite but finite itself, and the infinite through its own finitude's being transcended, and in that sense negated, by the infinite. Accordingly, as Hegel puts it, the finite and infinite "are only as *mediation* within themselves [*Vermittlung in sich*], and the affirmative of each" – namely, its uniting with itself – "contains the negative of each, and is the negation of the negation".²⁶

Hegel stresses that the finite and infinite *result* in being such movement and are not the latter from the start. At the start, each is a one-sided determination in opposition to the other; indeed, each excludes the other altogether, even though it is also bound to it. In the course of the infinite progress, however, each ceases being merely one side over against the other and *becomes* the movement or process of returning to, or continuing to be, itself in and through its other.²⁷

Yet, if each returns to itself via the *other*, each must also *remain* other than, and the negation of, the other. The finite and infinite do not, therefore, cease altogether being one-sided determinations. Their one-sidedness, however, no longer constitutes all that they are, but each in its one-sidedness comes to be a *moment* of the process that it becomes. Indeed, each in its one-sidedness comes to be a moment, not only of the process that it becomes, but of that which the other becomes, too: for the finite (as other than the infinite) comes to unite with itself, only because the *infinite* beyond it proves to be finite itself; and the infinite (as other than the finite) comes to unite with itself, only because the *finite* that it proves to be is again transcended by the infinite.

As Hegel writes, therefore, the finite and infinite are present in the infinite progress “as moments of a whole” and “emerge only by means of their opposites” (SL 118 / LS 148). Moreover, we can now see what it means for the finite and infinite to be *negated* in their unity. This was not made clear in Hegel’s external comparison of the two, but it is clear now: the one-sided finite and one-sided infinite are not simply eliminated in the infinite progress, but they are both transformed into *moments* of the *process* that each becomes.

Now, in the preceding paragraphs, we have distinguished two different processes of returning-to-oneself in the infinite progress: one beginning from the finite and one from the infinite. Logically, however, this difference must “fall away” (*hinwegfallen*), since both processes coincide and, indeed, are the *same* process of returning to, or uniting with, oneself via one’s negation.²⁸ There is in fact one process of returning to oneself in the infinite progress, and it is a matter of “total indifference” whether the finite or the infinite is considered to be the starting point of this process. This one process is what is “called with truth the infinite” (SL 118 / LS 148). It constitutes truly infinite, unending being, because it is the process in which one-sided determinations *continue* to be themselves in and through their negation and so are not brought to an end by the latter.

Note that the moments of this process are to be distinguished from the process itself: they are *what* comes to continue via its negation, rather than the very movement *of* coming to continue. Accordingly, they are not the true infinite itself but the finite. The meaning of the term “finite” has thus once again undergone a subtle transformation. As a simple one-sided determination, the finite is qualitatively distinct from the (bad) infinite. As *moments* of the truly infinite *process*, however, the finite and (bad) infinite are now both “*jointly the finite*”.

As Hegel points out, the finite and the infinite in the progress to infinity thus now both have a double meaning:

The finite has the double meaning, first, of being only the finite *over against* the infinite which stands opposed to it, and, second, of being *at the same time* the finite and the infinite opposed to it. Also the infinite has the double meaning of being *one* of those two moments – it is then the bad infinite – and of being the infinite in which the two, itself and its other, are only moments.

—SL 118 / LS 148²⁹

The infinite, according to speculative logic, is thus not simply and irrevocably opposed to the finite; rather, it reduces itself to the opposite of the finite, and so to being finite itself, and then “through this mediation” – in the way we have described above – it becomes “the *true infinite*” (SL 118 / LS 149). As the latter, the infinite is the unity of the infinite (in its bad form) and the finite. As Hegel

notes, however, the formula “of a *unity* of the finite and infinite” does not actually do justice to the true infinite, for it does not specify *how* the two are united. This unity, as we have seen, is not simply the joining together of two distinct elements, but the *process* in which those elements are both *moments*. More specifically, true infinity is the process in which its moments – the finite and the bad infinite – relate to, and unite with, themselves via one another.

The true infinite continues to differ from the finite – and so remains that which is *not* finite – since, as infinite process, it differs from its finite moments. Yet the true infinite is not something *other* than, or *beyond*, the finite; rather, it is the process that is constituted *by* its finite moments, as they unite with themselves via one another. Since neither moment by itself is the whole process, neither is by itself the true infinite. The true infinite, however, is nothing but the process *of* its moments. The intimate relation between “process” and “moment” that characterized becoming thus returns with the true infinite, though each moment is now *explicitly* a moment – the finite-as-moment-of-a-process – rather than just, as is the case with being and nothing, that which can be *described* as a “moment”.³⁰

Being a process with its own moments, rather than something in relation to something else, constitutes the distinctive *quality* of truly infinite being. The finite is characterized by being something that limits, and is limited by, something else – as well as by ceasing to be – but truly infinite being no longer exhibits this quality of limiting and being limited (and, indeed, the finite no longer exhibits it in an unqualified manner, insofar as it is a moment of true infinity). The second infinity we encountered already differed qualitatively from the finite by being continuous and unbounded, rather than limited by another; indeed, the finite vanished altogether in this infinity (see 1: 231–2). Yet, when the moment of negation in it was rendered explicit, infinity proved to be limited after all and so, in differing from the finite that it “resurrected”, simply mirrored the latter. Now, finally, the infinite has shown itself to differ from the finite in a way that preserves the latter (rather than eliminating it), but that does not reduce the infinite to being finite itself. The infinite thus now displays its truly distinctive quality, which consists in being, not other than and the limit of the finite, but the process in which and of which the finite is itself a moment. The infinite that is understood to be something other than, and so to transcend, the finite – whether it is found in philosophy, religion or everyday discourse, and whether it is deemed to be determinate or indeterminate – is thus not the true infinite, but rather the bad infinite. This is not to say that it is a fiction, but it is not the *infinite* it pretends to be. This claim may perplex, and even offend, some readers, but the logic of infinity permits no other conclusion: transcendence cannot be truly infinite, however it is conceived. True infinity does not lie *beyond* the realm of the finite, but is present *in* it: “It is, and is *there*, present, before us” (SL 119 / LS 149).³¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS

True infinity resembles the second – immediate – infinity, since neither has any *other* outside it to which it relates: each is wholly unbounded being. The former must, however, be distinguished from the latter. Immediate infinity consists in the simple continuity of being that arises in the changing of one finite thing into another: it is the being that, in the ending of things, does *not* itself end. As such, it is simply and immediately *infinite*; that is to say, it is infinity in which, despite being co-extensive with finitude, there is in fact no finitude or ending at all. When, however, the moment of negation in such immediate infinity is rendered explicit, the latter mutates logically into infinity that is other than and lies beyond the finite, and so turns into the bad infinite.

True infinity differs from immediate infinity because it incorporates finitude explicitly within itself: it is constituted by the finite in such a way that the latter does not simply disappear in it but is an explicit moment of it. Furthermore, it arises, not just when finite things cease to be, but when the finite, as real and persisting *Dasein*, unites with itself in and through its negation. Truly infinite being is thus not just the being that continues as finite things pass away, but it is the quality the finite displays when it becomes the process of relating to itself in and through another (and both become moments of that process). It is a quality or way of being exhibited by a finite thing in its relation to another finite thing.

Finite things, including human beings, remain resolutely finite, insofar as they remain, or take themselves to be, other than and the limit of one another. They exhibit the quality of true infinity, however, when they relate to themselves, and so find themselves, in the other to which they relate: for in this case they are no longer limited and brought to a stop by that other. This occurs, for example, in love, in which one person sees his or her identity sustained and enriched, rather than restricted, by the other; it also occurs when people share a consciousness of common citizenship and so recognize their own political, social and legal identity and rights in those of others.³²

Love and the consciousness of common citizenship are both examples of *self-consciousness*. The latter, for Hegel, is not simply the immediate awareness of oneself, or the narcissistic focus on oneself alone, but it is the process of finding oneself in and through the other to which one relates. It is realized most fully in relations of mutual recognition, in which one finds oneself recognized by another (or others) whom one recognizes in turn.³³ Self-consciousness is thus the process of relating to and uniting with oneself via one's negation. As Hegel writes later in the *Logic*, "self-consciousness is thus the nearest example of the presence of infinity" (SL 127 / LS 160). It confers on those who are able to enjoy it a sense of being unbounded and free in the presence of others, a sense that others do not just set limits to my identity, but allow me to *be* who and what I am.³⁴

True infinity is a quality exhibited by *finite* things, by entities that are on the way to destruction or death. Indeed, it can be exhibited only by such entities, not by immortals. Yet finite things do not constitute the process, and so exhibit the quality, of true infinity simply by passing away. They do so by being real, persisting entities that find themselves, in and through the others to which they relate, *before they are destroyed or die*. Hegel also states, however, that in true infinity “the finite is not the real” but the “ideal” (*das Ideelle*) (SL 119 / LS 150).³⁵ This claim is potentially misleading and requires further clarification.

By saying that the finite is not “real” but “ideal”, Hegel does not mean that it does not exist or that it exists only in or for the mind. Such, he thinks, is the claim made by subjective idealists like Kant. For Hegel’s Kant, the familiar objects we see around us are not illusory, but they are merely there for us, mere “appearances” with no independent existence of their own.³⁶ For Hegel, by contrast, finite things are perfectly real: they are what being itself proves to be and are thus what there *is* – independently of our cognition. In true infinity, however, they are not simply other than or independent of one another but are moments of a process. This is what Hegel means by saying that they are not “real” but “ideal”. “The ideal” (*das Ideelle*), he writes, “is the finite as it is in the true infinite – as a determination, a content, which is distinct [*unterschieden*], but is not an *independent being* [*selbständig seiend*], but only a *moment*” (SL 119 / LS 150).³⁷ Two people in love certainly have their own identities and interests. As *lovers*, however, they are not simply independent “realities” but they are in the process – indeed, they *are* both the process – of seeing themselves in one another. As such, they are at the same time “ideal” moments of that process: they are both moments of the infinite process of seeing-oneself-in-the-other that each constitutes and both constitute together. To some, this will sound unnecessarily mystical: surely, one might say, there are just two people who love one another, and that is all there is to it. In Hegel’s view, however, the category of true infinity opens up a more profound way of conceiving of love. From this perspective, love is not grounded in two independent individuals, but involves two people giving up their independence and turning themselves into *moments* of their unity with one another (see PR 199 / 307-8 [§ 158 A]).

In the course of Hegel’s philosophy, it becomes apparent that finite entities are moments of a wide array of different processes and unities. They form natural unities – mechanical, physical, chemical or organic systems – or they belong to social, economic and political systems. They are also moments of the process that constitutes the world as a whole: that in which being as such comes to self-consciousness and so becomes spirit. This process begins in nature, with the emergence of life, and then takes the form of world history, which is the “progress of the consciousness of freedom” (LPWH 54 / 63). Not all of these processes and unities are explicitly infinite in the sense that has been described. Yet they are all infinite to some extent, insofar as the finite things that belong to

them lack some degree of independence; and since all finite things are in this way *moments* of one or more of these processes and unities, all are more or less “ideal”.³⁸

“The proposition that the *finite* is *ideal* [*ideell*]”, Hegel writes, “constitutes *idealism*” (SL 124 / LS 156). Idealism, for Hegel, is thus not the thesis that finite things are mere appearances for a knowing subject (or, as Heidegger contends, just objects of consciousness), but the thesis that finite things, while quite real and independent of cognition, are *moments* of processes or unities.³⁹ Hegel’s own philosophy is an absolute idealism, therefore, because he holds that *everything*, to some degree, is such a moment – whether it belongs to the sphere of nature and matter, or to the sphere of ideas. The thought that the finite is, to a greater or lesser degree, a moment of a process is first opened up in the *Logic* by the category of true infinity. If one remains within the standpoint of finitude, in which things are other than, and the simple limit, of one another, one will, therefore, remain blind to this thought.

Being and nothing are, of course, moments of becoming, but they are purely vanishing moments; furthermore, at that point in the *Logic* there is not yet any finitude. Only with the true infinite does the *finite* prove to be an enduring *moment* of a process; only at this point, therefore, does speculative logic become an idealism in Hegel’s distinctive sense. For this reason, Hegel claims, the category of the true infinite is “the basic concept [*Grundbegriff*] of philosophy” (EL 152 / 203 [§ 95 R]).⁴⁰

CHAPTER TWELVE

Being-for-self, and the One and the Many

True infinity, for Hegel, is not an entity in its own right lying beyond the realm of finite things, but it is a quality, or way of being, that finite things exhibit. They do so, as they become the process of relating to themselves in their other (and thereby also become moments of that process). Being truly infinite is distinct, logically, from simply being “something” and from of being “finite”, but it is exhibited *by* finite somethings.

This continues to be true as true infinity mutates into further forms of itself: being-for-self, being one, and eventually quantity. These are new ways of being that are also distinct from being something and being finite, but they, too, belong to finite things. The lesson of Hegel’s logic will thus be that the finite thing is not just finite but also *one*, and that as such it is one of many and also many within its being-one, and that as such it is *quantitative*. Having said this, however, the explicit focus of Hegel’s logic will be on the distinctive logical structures of these determinations, not on their connection to finite somethings. As we shall see, these determinations will themselves contain the moments of determinacy and limit; but being one and being quantitative will not be conceived explicitly as qualities of *things* (at least not until half way through the logic of quantity).¹ The next pages of the *Logic* will thus disclose what it is to be one, and one of many, as such; in the course of those pages, however, *we* should retain the thought that these qualities are inseparable from and manifested by finite things (and that “ones” are not separate entities alongside things).

FROM TRUE INFINITY TO BEING-FOR-SELF

The category of the one (*Eins*) is a further form of being-for-self. Our first task, therefore, is to explain how true infinity leads to the latter category.

Recall that in the infinite progress the finite and the bad infinite relate to, and so continue to be, themselves in and through one another; or rather, each *comes* to continue as it is transcended by, or turns into, the other. Each is thus the *process* of uniting with itself via its opposite, the process Hegel calls “the *true infinite*”. The true infinite, therefore, is not a settled reality or simple something, but is “essentially only as *becoming* [Werden]” (SL 118 / LS 149). The moments of this process – the finite and bad infinite – are also “in the process of becoming” (*Werdende*): for they are not “moments” from the start, but are simply opposed to one another and only *become* moments as they *become* the “infinite” process of uniting with themselves via their negation.

Yet Hegel notes that the true infinite is not just becoming, but also wholly self-relating *being* (*Sein*). Whereas the finite is bounded by another finite or by the bad infinite, the true infinite is not bounded by anything else, but is simply itself, pure “self-relation”. As such, it is simple, self-sufficient being. When true infinity is thought explicitly *as* being, rather than becoming, we move to a new form of infinity and a new category. This infinity consists, not in *coming* to relate to oneself in the other, but in simply *being* infinitely self-relating, in relating infinitely to oneself. Such infinity is again exhibited by finite things, but it is subtly different from the infinity that arose at the end of the last chapter.

Note that the new infinite being is not the indeterminate being we encountered at the start of the *Logic*. It has a determinate character, for it is being that is *un-ending* and so *not* finite. It is thus not just being as such, but determinate being or *Dasein* (see SL 118, 120 / LS 149, 151). Yet, as truly infinite, such being cannot just be determinate but must also be wholly *self-relating*. Earlier in the *Logic* we encountered self-relating determinate being in the form of something (*Etwas*). Each something, however, stands in relation to another something and is the limit of the latter; as such, it also proves to be a finite thing. Truly infinite being, by contrast, is being that is no longer finite and limited. It is thus no longer something in relation to something else, but wholly self-relating being *with no other outside it*. This is not now to deny that it is determinate; it remains determinate (and negative) insofar as it is infinite, *not* merely finite. It is determinate, however, in a peculiar way: for that from which it differs – the finite – is not other than it but rather its *own* moment, and so it is wholly self-relating determinacy or “self-relating negation” (*sich auf sich beziehende Negation*) (SL 120 / LS 151). Such negation, or determinate being, that relates only to itself, is being that is, in Hegel’s words, wholly “for itself”. True infinity that has “collapsed into simple being” thus takes the form of “being-for-self” (*Fürsichsein*) (SL 120, 127 / LS 151, 160). This is a new form of infinity that is no longer a process or becoming, but being that is determinate, yet infinitely self-relating in its determinacy.

BEING-FOR-SELF

At the start of 1.1.3, Hegel states that “in *being-for-self*, *qualitative being* is brought to completion” (SL 126 / LS 158). This judgement might seem premature, for surely we do not know at this point whether or not quality will develop into further forms beyond being-for-self (and its immediate derivatives). Yet it is also easy to see what Hegel has in mind: *Dasein*, or qualitative being, is earlier defined as “the simple oneness of being and nothing” (SL 83 / LS 103), but only now with being-for-self are being and nothing (or, rather, negation) truly united. In being-for-self, therefore, what is implicit in quality becomes fully explicit, and quality attains its most fully developed form. Let us explain this point further.

In the general sphere of *Dasein* (set out in 1.1.2.A-C), being and negation are united in various ways, but always on the basis of “the difference [*Differenz*] of both” (SL 126 / LS 159). So reality differs from negation, something from its other, being-in-itself from being-for-other, and the (bad) infinite from the finite. In each case, Hegel argues, each of the two contrasting terms combines being and negation in a particular way; but there are *two* terms because affirmative and negative *Dasein* are “still unequal to one another, and their unity is still *not posited*”.

With being-for-self we are in a new situation, for the difference between being and negation, or determinacy, is, as Hegel puts it, “equalized” (*ausgeglichen*) (SL 126 / LS 159). This does not mean that it is eliminated, but rather that being and negation, in their difference, form a single unity. Being-for-self is negation, since it is a form of determinate being – being with a distinctive character. Yet it is at the same time the negation of negation, since it is *not just* determinate being, but wholly – infinitely – *self-relating* determinacy, or being-for-self. Note that determinate being and being-for-self are not other than one another, but the latter is simply the former insofar as this is itself not just what it is. Negation, or determinacy, and self-relating being thus completely coincide in being-for-self in a way that has not happened previously, and *Dasein* or quality thereby achieves its “completion”.

Being-for-self, then, is determinate being that is infinitely self-relating; or, as Hegel puts it, it is “*absolutely determinate being*” (*absolutes Bestimmtheit*) (SL 126 / LS 159). Recall that determinate being or quality as such takes the form of something (*Etwas*). Insofar as something is explicitly *determinate*, however, its being is bound up with that of other things; indeed, through its constitution it is subject to being changed by other things. In this respect, therefore, a thing’s determinate being or quality does not belong to it alone, but also depends on others. Insofar as something is *for itself*, however, it is not related to or affected by other things but is wholly self-relating. It thus exhibits a determinacy or quality that is wholly its own. In that sense it is “absolutely determinate”, for it

is absolutely what it is, absolutely itself. This points to another sense in which being-for-self is qualitative being in its “completion”. Quality takes the form of something; something is itself to the highest degree, however, when it is completely for itself. Being-for-self is thus the “completion” of qualitative being because it is the fullest manifestation of being oneself, of what one might call “*itselfness*”.

Yet there is a drawback to being-for-self: for one can be wholly self-relating, only insofar as one is *not just* determinate; but this means that being-for-self inevitably confers a certain *indeterminacy* on things. Being purely, or “infinitely”, itself thus turns out to deprive a thing of some of the determinacy that makes it what it is. Indeed, as we are about to see, it reduces the thing to an empty *one* (*Eins*). In this way being-for-self points forward logically to a form of being that is no longer qualitative at all, namely *quantity*.

BEING-FOR-ONE (*SEIN-FÜR-EINES*)

To repeat: being-for-self coincides with determinate being, since it is simply a peculiar, wholly self-relating, form of the latter. Yet the two also differ logically from one another, since being-for-self is, precisely, *not just* determinate being. This difference, however, does not set being-for-self and determinate being apart, as something and something else. It distinguishes being-for-self from the determinate being that belongs to it as its *moment*. Being-for-self is not reducible to determinate being and in that sense differs from the latter; nonetheless, determinate being is inseparable from, and a moment *of*, being-for-self, and without it being-for-self would be utterly indeterminate.

Now since being-for-self is true infinity in the form of being, the determinate being that differs from it, but belongs to it, is finitude. Being-for-self is thus infinite being that includes finitude as a moment within it. Having said this, we should not lose sight of the subtle difference between finitude in true infinity as such and in being-for-self.

In true infinity as such, that is, as becoming, its finite moments are also in the process of becoming, since they *become* moments as they *become* the infinite process of relating to themselves via their negation. In true infinity as self-relating *being*, however, the finite also takes the form of being rather than becoming: it is present in being-for-self in the form of determinate being or *Dasein*. Being-for-self, however, is not related – like something – to an other but is wholly self-relating, so determinate being, as a moment of being-for-self, cannot be *other* than the latter (just as the finite as a moment of the true infinite is not other than it). Yet, as a mere *moment* of being-for-self, determinate being differs from, and so stands in *relation* to, the self-relating unity to which it belongs. Hegel expresses the idea of relation through the preposition “for” (so to be other-related is to be *for* another) (see 1: 187). Determinate being,

conceived as a moment of, and so as related to, the unity of being-for-self, must, therefore, be thought as being *for* that unity or oneness, or, in Hegel's distinctive expression, as "*being-for-one*" (*Sein-für-Eines*) (SL 128 / LS 161). Determinate being that belongs to something in relation to something else is being-for-other; understood, however, as a *moment* of a unity that is not something other than it (and that relates to no other), determinate being is being-for-one. The latter thus "expresses how the finite is in its unity with the infinite or is an *ideal* being [*Ideelles*]" (when the infinite is conceived as being-for-self).

Note, by the way, the intimate logical connection between being a "moment" and being "being-for-one": being a moment explicitly (when this is a form of being, rather than becoming) just *is* being a being-for-one, since it is just being a moment of, and so being *for*, the unity to which it belongs. At the start of the *Logic* being and nothing are both described by Hegel as "moments" of becoming, but as such each is explicitly just that which vanishes into the other (SL 80 / LS 99).² In true infinity, however, we encounter moments – namely, the finite – that are moments explicitly: the finite *as* mere moments of the infinite process they constitute (see 1: 245, 288). When such an explicit moment is conceived as a moment of infinite *being* or being-for-self, rather than infinite becoming, and so as a way of being itself, it is conceived as being that is only there *for* the unity to which it belongs. Its being a moment of such unity is conceived as its being *for* it, and so as being-for-one. "Being-for-one" is thus in truth just a synonym for "being-a-moment" – that is, being a moment explicitly – and so in what follows I shall occasionally use the terms interchangeably.

Determinate being thus takes two forms in being-for-self: once as wholly self-relating determinacy and so as being-for-self itself, and once as the moment of determinacy within the latter, or being-for-one. Note that in neither case is determinate being related to anything *other* than it (as "reality" and "something" are). As wholly self-relating, or being-for-self, determinate being clearly relates to no other. Yet conceived as a moment, as being-for-one, it is not related to anything other either, since it is a moment of that from which it differs. Being-for-one differs from being-for-self, since it is a dependent moment whereas the latter is independent being; but being-for-one is, precisely, a moment of being-for-self and so is not something *other* than the latter. This means in turn that being-for-self is not something other than its own moment. Nonetheless, being-for-self *differs* from its moment in the manner we have indicated, and, as Hegel now points out, this has a significant logical consequence: for it turns out to undermine the very form of being-for-self.

Being-for-one, as a moment, is not self-relating, self-sufficient being, but consists solely in being *for*, or related *to*, the oneness of being-for-self. As such, it is merely one side of a relation or difference. Being-for-self, by contrast, is wholly self-sufficient and, as such, is the free-standing "one" (*Eines*) in which its moment – being-for-one – is contained. Yet closer inspection reveals that

being-for-self is not actually self-sufficient, and thus a self-relating “one”, after all: for it is itself *one side* of the relation and difference between itself and its moment, and, as one side of that difference, it is itself merely a *moment* or being-for-one (and, in this sense, is finite). In Hegel’s own words, “that for which something (and there is no something here) would be, what the other side as such should be, is likewise a moment, itself only being-for-one, not yet a one [*noch nicht Eines*]” (SL 128 / LS 161).

It turns out, therefore, that being-for-self and its moment are both merely moments of their difference and so are both being-for-one. This means, however, that there is not actually any self-relating *being-for-self* in which being-for-one would be contained – “there is not the one of which it would be the moment” (SL 128 / LS 161). All there is, are two moments in a relation, two sides of a difference. Unlike reality and negation, however, these two sides are not qualitatively different – one affirmative and one negative – but both are equally *non-self-sufficient* and “momentary”: both are being-for-one. As Hegel notes, “*being-for-one* and *being-for-self* do not therefore constitute two genuine determinacies over against one another”. Being-for-one, as a moment, relates to the being-for-self, or the one (*Eines*), from which it differs; yet, since that one is itself merely the other *moment* of that difference, “the one, for which it [being-for-one] is, is only itself” (SL 128 / LS 162).

Logically, therefore, being-for-self undermines itself and proves not to be purely *for itself* after all. Being-for-self, as such, is infinitely self-relating being; since it is not just indeterminate being, however, it contains within it the moment of determinacy. Being-for-self is not something other than this moment – for it relates to nothing other than it – but it does differ from it, since it is the unity or oneness *to* which that moment belongs. Its very differing from that internal moment, however, reduces it to a moment, too. It thus ceases being purely self-relating being – being that is purely *for itself* – and becomes a one-sided being-for-one, just like its own moment. There is, therefore, no longer any being-for-self, but there are just two identical moments of a single difference.³

As we are about to see, this reduction of being-for-self to the relation between two moments generates further logical development. Before Hegel sets out that development, however, he considers briefly what would happen if, while recognizing that both are moments, we continue to regard one of them as “being-for-self” – or, rather, as *a* being-for-self – and so “momentarily” (*auf einen Augenblick*) retain the distinction between being-for-self and being-for-one that has just disappeared (SL 128 / LS 161). In this case, he argues, the meaning of “being-for-self” would be subtly altered, for it would no longer be wholly self-relating being in contrast to its moment, but would be a moment itself; and since it would itself be one-sided or “*for-one*”, it could be wholly self-relating – and so *for itself* – only insofar as the other moment to which it

relates is the *same as itself*. So it would be the moment of “being-for-self”, rather than “being-for-one”; but it could *be* for itself only in and through the other moment. This more complex conception of being-for-self is to be found, Hegel remarks, in the self-conscious I, in spirit, and in God (as conceived by religion and philosophy). In immediate self-consciousness, the I is for itself, but only because it is itself that which is for it, that of which it is conscious. Similarly, Hegel writes, “God is [. . .] *for himself*, in so far as he is himself that which is *for him*” (SL 128 / LS 162). In these cases, being-for-self is thus not just the unity or oneness *to* which its moment belongs, but rather being that relates to itself only *in* that moment.

THE ONE (*EINS*)

Being-for-self belongs irreducibly to the I, spirit and God (conceived as “God”, rather than the logical Idea), since they are forms of explicit self-consciousness. They do not, therefore, lose their being-for-self just because they stand, as moments, in relation to their own moments. The case of purely logical being-for-self is, however, different. It is for itself only insofar as it is self-relating and *not* one-sided and dependent like its moment, being-for-one. Once it proves to be a moment, therefore, it ceases altogether to be *for itself*. Accordingly, there is no longer being-for-self and its moment, being-for-one, but there are just two moments that are no more than one-sided *moments*.

The very logic of being-for-self thus causes it to disappear. The two moments that are left, however, are exactly the same: each is equally a moment and so is being-for-one. This marks an important point in the development Hegel is tracing: for it means that there are not in fact two different moments in relation to one another, but there is simply being-for-one – being a moment – that relates solely to *itself*. As being-for-self reduces itself to a moment, therefore, it gives rise to being-for-one that is itself wholly self-relating and so *for itself*. Being-for-self thus re-emerges at the very point at which it disappears. It does not, however, prove once again to be a moment, for it does not now differ from, and stand in relation to, being-for-one or being-a-moment; rather, it is the self-relating that is constituted *by* being-a-moment itself. Recall that a moment as such is being that is not self-sufficient and so is not purely itself; in that sense, it is being that is negated or “sublated” (see SL 80 / LS 99). The self-relating of being-a-moment, or being-for-one, that has now arisen can thus be described as the self-relating of the sublated, or in Hegel’s words “the self-relation of the sublating [*des Aufhebens*]” – an ungainly expression, even for Hegel, that taken out of context would be well-nigh incomprehensible (SL 132 / LS 166).

Note that what emerges here is a new form of self-relating being that we have not encountered before. *Dasein* relates to itself to form “something”, but

at the same time each of its two moments – reality and negation – relates to itself in the *other* in which it is “concealed” (thereby yielding “something” and its “other”) (see 1: 170, 176). The finite and bad infinite, too, come to unite with themselves via one *another* (yielding true infinity as a process or “becoming”). Being-for-one, however, relates immediately, and solely, to *itself*: the moment to which it relates is not its other or negation, but is simply itself – being-for-one – *once again*. The self-relation that is constituted by being-for-one is thus an immediate self-relation or pure being-for-self (rather than an infinite process). Yet it is not pure and simple immediacy – such as we saw at the beginning of the *Logic* – but an immediacy based on “negating” (*Negieren*) (SL 132 / LS 166). More precisely, it is based on negating the difference between moments and negating the very form of being a moment at all. Unlike the first being-for-self, therefore, the new being-for-self does not contain any *moment*, or being-for-one, within itself. This point now needs further consideration.

When the first being-for-self reduces itself to a moment in relation to its own moment, there are initially, and momentarily, *two* moments. That difference immediately disappears, however, because each moment is identical to the other: each is equally a moment or being-for-one. What there is, therefore, are not two moments, but the immediate *self-relating* of being-a-moment, of being-for-one. Immediate self-relation – the new being-for-self – thus arises with the collapse – that is, with the negating – of the *difference* between moments. Indeed, being-for-self here is identical with the collapse, or rather “having-collapsed”, of that difference: as Hegel writes, “the *moments* of being-for-self have collapsed into the *undifferentiatedness* which is immediacy or being” (SL 132 / LS 166).

With this collapse of the difference between moments, the very form of being a moment also disappears. A moment is just one side of a difference or relation; in relating to itself, however, being-a-moment, or being-for-one, *ceases* being just one side, and so ceases being what it is, and constitutes immediate being-for-self instead. In this respect, too, therefore, immediate being-for-self is based on “negating”, namely on negating – or, rather, on the self-negating of – being-a-moment.

Since the new being-for-self is constituted by the collapse of the difference between moments and the disappearance of being-a-moment itself, it is immediately itself *with no internal moments*. It does not, however, just lack such moments, as does pure being, but its immediacy consists explicitly in *not* having them. This is the case because it is immediate self-relation that just is the *having-disappeared* of the moments. The new being-for-self is thus not indeterminate but determinate immediacy – an immediacy, whose determinacy resides explicitly in not-having-moments. It is important to stress that this being-for-self is determinate, not by virtue of having a determination and

constitution, but specifically by virtue of *not* having what it lacks. Its determinacy thus introduces an explicit *limit* (*Grenze*) into it: being-for-self, as it has now re-emerged, is both defined and limited by the fact that it has *no* moments. Yet it is also purely self-relating determinacy with no other outside it. It has its defining limit, therefore, purely within itself, and is not limited by anything else. Accordingly, Hegel writes, being-for-self is “the wholly abstract limit of itself” (SL 132 / LS 166). Such being that is determinate and limited, but purely and immediately self-relating, and that has no internal moments, is called by Hegel “the *one*” (*das Eins*). This one is not the “one” (*Eines* or *das Eine*) that being-for-self was initially, and which contained being-for-one as its moment. Rather, it stands there by itself, without any internal differentiation, as purely and simply *one*. It is being-for-self as a single, limited, self-enclosed entity, as *a* being-for-self (*Fürsichseiendes*) (SL 132 / LS 166).

Speculative logic shows, therefore, that being must take the form, not only of being determinate, being something, and being finite, but also of being one. Indeed, being-for-self in the form of being *one* is the true fulfilment of qualitative being: it is being absolutely oneself, without relation to anything else and without any internal multiplicity. Note that being one cannot be thought on the basis of the earlier categories of determinate being: something is not explicitly a *one* just by virtue of being something (even though the latter is self-relating determinacy), nor is anything one insofar as it is simply finite. Being one is a further form of being-for-self and so consists in being *infinitely* self-relating. This is not to deny that every *finite* something is also one (as I noted at the start of this chapter); but what it is to *be* “one” is a new category altogether that is quite different from being “something” or being “finite”.

THE ONE AND THE VOID

Having derived the category of the one, Hegel now proceeds to determine it further by rendering explicit what is implicit in it.⁴ The first thing he notes is that the one, unlike the mere something, is not subject to change. The one is immediately self-relating being, and more precisely self-relating determinacy. Yet such determinacy consists, not in being an *other* and in being other-related – like the something – but in being explicitly *in-determinate*: the one has no internal differentiation, and also has no relation to an other outside it and no constitution. Indeed, Hegel writes, the one consists precisely in “having negated this circle of categories” (SL 133 / LS 168). By virtue, however, of not being something that is other than another, and so not being other itself, the one is incapable of becoming *other than itself* and so is “unalterable” (*unveränderlich*). Every something is in the process of othering itself, or changing, and is vulnerable through its constitution to being changed by others; pure indeterminate being, too, vanishes immediately into nothing. The one, by

contrast, is and remains the one that it is and never becomes anything else. It is always – infinitely – *itself*. (A finite thing that is *one* thing thus changes and decays because it is something and finite, not because it is one. As one, it is, unalterably, just that: *one* thing.)

The fact that the one is self-relating, or “absolute”, determinacy also has another consequence, one that draws on the idea that determinacy, as negation, involves a reference to something *else* (see 1: 180). This latter thought did not arise with the first being-for-self, since it is purely *self*-relating being with no other at all. The one, however, is not just being-for-self but *a* being-for-self, with an internal limit, and so, like “something” (which is *a* determinate being), it refers, through the moment of negation and limit it contains, to an other. Yet the one, as *one* and so immediate being-*for-self*, has no other. It is thus entangled in a paradoxical relation to another that it does not have.

The one, by its nature, is purely itself, with no relation to another. Yet it does not simply lack an other, but its determinacy (or limit) lies explicitly in *not* having any other, in *negating* all that would be other than it (just as it lies in *not* having any internal difference). This moment of negation and limit, however, sets the one in relation *to* what is other. The one thus looks away from itself and says “no” to whatever *else* there might be; yet the one, as purely self-relating, *has no other* and so is not related to anything “else” at all. To put it another way, by negating all that would be other, the one is directed *out* towards an other; but encountering no other, it is immediately directed back to itself. Hegel pulls these thoughts together in the following lines. The one, he writes,

directs itself away from itself towards another, but this direction is immediately turned round, because, according to this moment of self-determining, there is no other towards which the one can go, and the direction has thus returned into itself.

—SL 133 / LS 168

These thoughts may seem unnecessarily paradoxical, but they belong necessarily to the logical structure of the one. The latter is self-relating being, but it is not only that, for it is also being that is *not anything else*. This moment of negation and determinacy does not, however, connect the one directly to anything else, for there *is*, and can be, nothing other than it since the one is pure self-relation. Such determinacy reinforces, rather, this very self-relation because the one is directed away from, but then right back to, itself. In this way, the moment of determinacy adds a negative “edge” to the one: it turns the latter into that which actively *shuts out* anything else (that is not there anyway). The mere something (*Etwas*) is self-relating being, whose determinacy binds it to something else (even insofar as it limits the other) (see e.g. 1: 201–3). The determinacy of the one, by contrast, makes it *exclusively* itself. As Hegel puts it

in the *Encyclopaedia*, the one is “that which *excludes* the *other* from itself” ([*das*] *das Andere aus sich* Ausschließende), and it does so to such a degree that it allows there to be no other at all (EL 153 / 203 [§ 96]). The one is thus not just, as it were, innocently itself, but it erects a barrier before, and so sets a limit to, an outside world that does not exist. The exclusion by the one of anything else is thus absolute, and strengthens the idea that the one is *purely* and *only* itself.⁵

The one, therefore, cannot be thought without difference, but the difference it involves immediately cancels itself: the one is *not* anything else, but there is *nothing else* for it not to be. Equally, the one cannot be thought without internal difference – the difference between moments – but in this case, too, as we have seen, the one incorporates difference only insofar as the latter has cancelled itself and so is explicitly absent. Hegel now draws out a significant implication of this thought that has so far remained unthought.

The one as such is “simple immediacy” or “affirmative being”; but it is also negative, for it is based on negating the prior difference between moments and negating the very form of being a moment. The one’s affirmative and negative dimensions, however, have so far been understood to coincide completely. As we saw above, immediate, affirmative being-for-self – or the one – emerges with the collapse of the difference between moments; indeed, Hegel writes, the “*undifferentiatedness*” of the moments just *is* the immediate self-relation, or being-for-self, that they constitute (see SL 132 / LS 166). For this reason, the one does not simply lack moments, but its immediacy consists explicitly in *not* having them, in being *undifferentiated*. Yet the affirmative and negative dimensions of the one cannot just coincide in this way: for, precisely because its affirmative being is “simple immediacy”, its being negative must itself be immediately *different* from this and so be immediately *negative*. So conceived, however, the negative dimension to the one is not something other than the one; nor is it a mere subordinate moment of the one. It is the one itself *as* immediately negative, rather than *as* immediately affirmative.

The negative dimension to the one is the latter’s “undifferentiatedness”. This is thought as explicitly *negative* when it is thought explicitly as *undifferentiatedness*, as difference’s having-*vanished*. As explicitly negative, however, it is no longer just equivalent to the presence of immediate, “affirmative” self-relation; it is, rather, the explicit *absence* of difference and determinacy – absence *as* absence, *as* utterly negative. It is, in other words, the sheer negative, or “*nothing*” (*Nichts*), at the heart of the one. At the start of the *Logic*, we encountered pure, indeterminate nothing; the nothing that has now come to the fore is that which belongs specifically to the one. It is the nothing that Hegel calls the “void” (*das Leere*). This void is not just an emptiness that *we* can see in the one, but it is built explicitly into the one itself: as Hegel puts it, the void “is the *quality* of the one in its immediacy” (SL 133 / LS 168). It

turns out, therefore, that the one is not only self-relating determinacy, but also *self-negating* determinacy in two senses: as one, it is determinacy that is *not* just determinate – not just “this, rather than that” – but wholly self-relating; and, as the void, it is determinacy that consists in the explicit negation and absence of all determinacy and difference.

The one thus differs radically from a mere something, which always relates to something else and is internally differentiated. The one is wholly self-relating determinacy that is unchangeable and whose determinate character or quality is to be utterly empty. This is not to deny that a thing that is one unified thing will, as *something*, retain the different qualities and logical moments that make it what it is. What Hegel is here setting out, however, is just what it is to be *one*, without further qualification; and his claim is that to be one, taken by itself, is to be nothing but a bare, abstract unit. To be one, and so to be purely for oneself, may well be the fulfilment of qualitative being, but it is a fulfilment in which determinacy and quality are reduced to indeterminacy and emptiness.

This, however, is not all that is to be said about the one and the void, because the logic of the one now leads it to expel the void from itself. The one is wholly self-relating being that completely excludes anything different from it, and initially this means that there is nothing at all that is not the one. The one thus stands alone as just this *one*. Once the one is thought together with the void, however, there turns out to be a moment that is not the one after all: for whereas the one is immediately affirmative, the void is immediately negative and so immediately “distinct” (*verschieden*) from the one, even though it is the quality of the one itself (SL 133-4 / LS 169). The one’s exclusion of what is different has thus now to be thought anew: for if the one is now to be exclusively itself, it must exclude from itself its very own *void* and set the latter completely outside it. The self-relating one has a negative “edge”: it differs, not by being other, but by utterly *excluding*. It must therefore exclude from itself – from its being *one* – the void that it contains but from which it also differs. The void remains thereby the emptiness that belongs to the one. Yet it now no longer just falls within the one itself, but, “as distinct from affirmative being, the nothing as the void is *outside* [*außer*] the affirmative one” as well.

To repeat: the one is immediately affirmative and purely self-relating, purely *itself*. Moreover, it is not just indifferent to what might be other than it, but it actively excludes any conceivable other, to such a degree indeed that it permits there to be nothing other than it, nothing that is not it. Yet the one contains within it an inner emptiness or void that is wholly negative and so differs from the one itself. The one is itself empty and featureless, but since it is also immediately affirmative it necessarily distinguishes itself from its own negative void. The one cannot, however, just allow the void to be a different moment within it. Since the one is purely and exclusively self-relating, purely the one

that it is, it excludes from itself *anything* that is not it, and that means that it must exclude the *void* from itself, too. To be purely itself, the one must exclude from itself the very void that it contains. Note that Hegel is not here describing a process in time in which the void miraculously pops into existence outside the one. He is rendering explicit what the void, *logically*, must be. And he shows that, since the void is immediately different from the one, but the one excludes anything that is not it, the void must fall outside (as well as inside) the one. The one initially has nothing outside it but stands alone as the pure one; we now see, however, that it also *has* nothing outside it in the form of the surrounding void.

When being-for-self first arises, it contains determinate being as a moment within it, as being-for-one. Then in the one as *Eins* (rather than *Eines*), its determinacy or quality consists in the utter absence of determinacy, or the void. Now, Hegel points out, “being-for-self, determined in this way as the one *and* the void, has again acquired a determinate being [*Dasein*]” (SL 134 / LS 169). It does not, however, contain such determinate being *within* it as its moment, for within itself it is still quite empty. It is now determinate being because it has an other – the void – *outside* it and so is itself other than this other. The one is thus in the contradictory position of being wholly self-relating, or pure *being-for-self*, and at the same time being an explicitly *determinate* being or *other*.

The void, by the way, does not cease being the void just because it now falls outside the one: it is the utter nothingness by which the one is surrounded. Since the void is sheer nothingness and emptiness, the one in turn remains a purely self-relating one that *has no other*. And yet the one does now have an other: for the very absence of otherness is itself *present* outside the one in the form of the void. The one thus continues to be itself alone; now, however, it is purely itself, not just because there is nothing other than it, but because it is surrounded *by nothing* and hangs alone *in the void*. This is true of any thing insofar as it is just one. As a thing, it relates to another thing and is one in a series of finite things. As a pure and simple *one* (*Eins*), however, disregarding what else belongs to being something, a thing (at least initially) is just itself, exclusively itself, and in that sense it stands alone in a void – a void that is, logically, of its own making. (Note that this applies to human beings as much as other things: if one isolates oneself as just oneself, as just this one person, one surrounds oneself with emptiness.)

We have thus reached “the category that made its appearance among the ancients as the *atomistic principle*, according to which the essence of things is the *atom* and the *void*” (SL 134 / LS 169). For the ancient atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, however, there is more than just one atom. Hegel now shows that the same is true of the one, because the one hanging in the void necessarily gives rise to many ones through a movement that Hegel calls *repulsion*.⁶

THE MANY ONES

Hegel begins his derivation of the many by repeating that “the one and the void constitute being-for-self in its initial determinate being [*Dasein*]” (SL 135 / LS 171). The one is purely self-relating being, yet it distinguishes itself from and excludes its own void, setting the latter outside itself. It thus turns both that void and itself into moments that are determinate insofar as each is *not* the other, indeed into moments that are *other* than one another. Each is thus now, not just itself, but the *negation* of its negation and “an other to its other” – though they also differ from one another insofar as “the one [*das Eins*] is negation in the determination of being”, and the void is “negation in the determination of non-being”.

This relation to the void is not an accidental feature of the one, but the one is by its nature related to, and the negation of, the void: in Hegel’s words, “the one is essentially relation to itself only as relating *negation* [*beziehende Negation*]”. In this respect, however, the one is in fact the same as the void, since the latter is equally essentially tied to, and the negation of, the one. Each, then, is not the other, indeed the one excludes the void; but each is related negatively *to* the other. The one necessarily hangs in the void, therefore, and the void in turn necessarily surrounds the one.

Yet Hegel notes that neither the void nor the one is simply *negative*, but that each is also “an affirmative *determinate being*” (*ein affirmatives Dasein*). The one is clearly affirmative, since it is self-relating being or being-for-self. Yet the void, in its nothingness, is also affirmative, since it is not just not-the-one, but, as excluded from the one, it is quite *other* than the latter and as such has a *being* of its own as “indeterminate determinate being”. Note the ambiguity here. The void is explicitly negative, since it lacks all inner determinacy; yet it is not sheer nothing, but it *is there*, outside the one, *as* explicitly negative, *as* total emptiness. The void does not thereby become “something” with all the features that go along with the latter, but it remains the void or sheer non-being; yet it is not just negative but has an affirmative *Dasein* as sheer non-being. Pure nothing, at the start of the *Logic*, vanishes into pure being and in so doing ceases to be nothing. The void, by contrast, is the nothing that, *as* nothing, *is there* (*ist da*), surrounding and other than the one. The one in turn is the affirmative *Dasein* that is other than the void. The one and the void are, therefore, not only opposed to one another as being to non-being, but each is also “related to the other as to *another determinate being*” (SL 135 / LS 171).

Yet the one cannot just be *other* than the void, since it is *one* and so is pure being-for-self, pure relation *to itself*. As such, Hegel writes, the one is “the ideality [*Idealität*] of determinate being and of the other”: it contains determinacy sublated within it, but in so doing “relates not to an other but only *to itself*” (SL 135 / LS 171). The one, as being-for-self, is determinate since it is

not just finite but infinitely self-relating being; but as such it relates precisely to itself alone, not to anything other than it.

And yet the one does now relate to an other, since it has the void as “*another determinate being*” outside it. If it is to be *one*, however, it must be and remain purely self-relating in its relation to this other; that is to say, its relation to that other, which is its negation, must be “its *negative relation to itself*” (SL 135 / LS 171). If the one is to be the *one* that it is, it must relate to *itself* in its *non-being* – the void – outside it. This in turn means that the void can no longer just be the *void*, but must take on a new character. It is obvious what that character must be: if the one is to relate solely to itself in the other outside it, then that other must itself be *one*, rather than a mere void. There must, therefore, be at least two ones; and since the second one is subject to the same dialectic as the first, and so on, there must in fact be many ones. The one thus generates the many through its own immanent logic.

Yet in drawing this conclusion, I am actually jumping ahead. Hegel goes more slowly and reaches the same conclusion through a somewhat longer argument. This does not conflict with the one I have just set out, but explains in more detail how and why the pure self-relation of the one requires the void outside it to become a one itself.

Let’s go back to the idea – in the paragraph before last – that, in relating to the void, the self-relating one must be in a “*negative relation to itself*”. Such a relation is negative insofar as the one relates to itself in what is *not* a one, but precisely the *void*. So what exactly turns this relation into the relation between the one and another *one*?

Hegel first notes that the one is “fixed” as that which is “*immediately present*”, as a simple immediate *being* (*Seiendes*) that is for itself (SL 135 / LS 171). This immediacy belongs to the one from the start. As we saw above, the one results from the *immediate* self-relating of being-for-one; it is thus itself “an *immediacy*”, namely immediate being-for-self.⁷ The one’s “*negative relation to itself*”, which we are now considering, must, therefore, be a “relation to a *being*” (*Beziehung auf ein Seiendes*); and that in turn means that the void, in which the one relates “negatively” to itself, must itself be such a being. This alone does not turn the void into a one, but it reinforces the idea, encountered above, that the void to which the one relates must be not just negative but *affirmative*. Such affirmative being, however, is now made necessary not just by the fact that the void is other than the one and so has a *Dasein* of its own, but by the fact that the one must relate to *itself* in that void.

As Hegel reminds us, however, the one must relate *negatively* to itself in the void. This void belongs to the one: it is the one’s own void. Yet the one has expelled the void from itself, so the latter is now definitely *not* the one: it is that which is *other* than the one. This moment of negation is logically necessary, so it must be preserved even though the one must now relate to itself in the void

outside it. As we have just seen, if the one is indeed to relate to *itself* in this void, the latter must be an empty immediate being, just like the one. At the same time, however, if the relation of the one to the void is to be “negative” – if the one is to relate to what is *not* it – the void must be “determined as a *determinate being* and an *other*” (SL 136 / LS 171). The one, therefore, must relate to itself in what is *other* than it.

Once again, this is insufficient to turn the void into another *one*. This change occurs, however, if we render explicit a further implication of the idea that the one must relate to *itself* in the void. This implication is that the void must exhibit the very quality of *self-relation* that belongs to being-one. When this thought is rendered explicit, the logical transformation of the void is complete: for the void is now determined by the one to be, not just a void, but an affirmative *being* that is utterly empty, has a *Dasein* of its own and is purely *self-relating* (or pure being-for-self). Such a being, of course, is, precisely, a one. Accordingly, in Hegel’s words, “as essentially relation *to itself*, the other is not indeterminate negation as the void, but likewise a *one*” (SL 136 / LS 171). The one, as self-relating, must therefore relate, not just to another empty being, but to another *one*, and so there must be at least *two* ones. The other one, however, is subject to the same dialectic and so gives rise to a further one, which in turn gives rise to a further one, and so on indefinitely. Hegel concludes that “the one is consequently the *becoming of many ones* [Werden zu vielen Eins]”. Earlier we saw that the finite, in ceasing to be, leads to another finite, and another *ad infinitum*. The one gives rise to other ones, however, not by ceasing to be, but by being and relating to itself. Consequently, the ones that arise do not supplant one another (like finite things), but stand together with their counterparts. It is this that makes them *many* ones, rather than members of a series that can never coexist.

It should be noted, by the way, that the void is itself already a “negative relation to itself”, insofar as it is a pure void. This is because it is simply the empty self-relation of the one itself, but as explicitly negative rather than positive (see SL 134 / LS 169). This, however, is not sufficient by itself to turn the void into a one, since, as void, it is explicitly and qualitatively distinct from the one (and excluded from the latter). What turns the void outside the one into another one is the following twofold fact: (a) that the one, in relating to its other, is still a one, still being-for-self, and as such relates explicitly to *itself* in that other, and (b) that in so doing the one confers not just immediate being but pure self-relation on its other. The one thus generates other ones through excluding itself from itself in the form of the void, but at the same, in relating to that void, remaining purely self-relating being-for-self.

It is important to stress that it is the nature of the one alone that requires there to be other ones. The one is simply one, or immediately self-relating being; *and yet* it is at the same time the explicit absence – *as* utterly negative – of internal difference and determinacy, or what Hegel calls the void. This void is the quality

of the one itself: the one is necessarily empty. *And yet* the void is also immediately different from the one and so is excluded by the latter. It is thus set outside the one, as the emptiness by which the one is surrounded. *And yet*, the one is pure being-for-self and so relates only and always to *itself*, even in relating to the void outside it. This external void must thus itself be *one*; and so, logically, there must be at least one and *another* one. This other one, as one, gives rise in turn to another one, and so on, and in this way the one, purely by itself, generates many ones. This is Hegel's "solution" to the ancient "problem" of the one and the many. Or rather it is his demonstration that, if the one is understood speculatively, there is no problem to be solved. A problem arises only if one thinks of the one as purely affirmative and purely itself without any moment of negation and difference at all: for in that case, how can there be one *and* many? If, however, we conceive of the one as we should, namely as immediately self-relating, and at the same time as excluding its negation (the void), and so as relating to itself *in* that negation, then there is nothing the one can be but many ones.

This, indeed, is the first point in speculative logic at which there are, and must be, *many*. Something (*Etwas*) is not one of many, but is one of a pair. This reflects its logical history: something and other are simply reality and negation, understood as self-relating, so something is related by its logical structure only to its other, not to a whole array of others. This is not to deny that in nature there are many things, each of which is other than something else, but the inherent logic of "something" as such (and of *Dasein*) only makes one other necessary (a point that is missed by McTaggart).⁸ The other, equally, refers back just to something, since it is precisely other *than* the latter. It is true that the other also proves to be other than itself and so on, and so gives rise to change; but such change merely makes something new *of* the thing that undergoes the change, and so does not itself produce a series of different somethings (see 1: 183).

The finite, in contrast to the simple something, is finite (at least initially) *by itself*, not through being one of a pair. It is thus purely self-negating and ceases to be of its own accord. In ceasing to be, however, it gives rise to another finite, and another, and so on, and so spawns an endless series of finites. Yet, since each vanishes as the next one arises, they do not – insofar as they are *finite* – form a *manifold* together.

The one, as we have seen, is a further form of infinite being, or being-for-self, rather than finitude, and as such it is wholly self-relating. To begin with, it thus stands completely alone and so, unlike something, has no logical counterpart or limiting other: it is not by its nature one of a pair. This in turn means that when the one gives rise to another one, that second does not itself refer back to the first, leaving only two, as in the case of something and its other; rather, that second one gives rise to a third, which gives rise to a fourth, and so on. Yet, unlike the finite, one one does not give rise to another by ceasing to be, but it remains the unchanging one that it is in generating other ones. Since, therefore,

the one, through its logical structure, gives rise to more than just one other, and since the ones do not vanish as the new ones emerge, ones must coexist as *many* ones.

The distinctive logical structure of the one is thus what makes the many necessary, indeed possible at all, and for this reason there is no “many” before this point in logic. The many things in nature are clearly more than just “ones” in Hegel’s technical sense; yet their being *many* has its ultimate logical ground in the fact that each is *one* thing. It is thanks only to the one that there are many at all, so the many are by necessity many *ones*.⁹ (There can be many coexisting finite things, therefore, only because each is not just finite but also one.)¹⁰

HEGEL AND PLATO ON THE ONE AND THE MANY

Before we continue with Hegel’s account of the one and the many, we should briefly draw attention to a significant difference between the ways in which Hegel and Plato treat these concepts. In both his *Logic* and lectures on the history of philosophy Hegel maintains that Plato, too, treats these concepts dialectically, namely in the *Parmenides*. Plato’s concern, we are told, “is to demonstrate that, if we posit the category of the one [*des Einen*] by itself, the characteristic of multiplicity [*Vielheit*] is directly contained in it and vice versa” (LHP 2: 207 / VGP 3: 36).¹¹ Hegel notes that Plato was “highly esteemed by the ancients” for being the founder of the “science” of dialectic and he clearly shares that esteem. He describes Plato’s dialectic of the one and the many in particular as (largely) “correct” (*richtig*).¹² Yet Hegel also criticizes the latter dialectic for not being “wholly pure” (*ganz rein*). The problem, in his view, is that Plato does not actually derive the many from “the one by itself”, from the one *alone*.

The one gives rise to the many, for Hegel, because, as *one*, it is empty, exclusive and purely self-relating. The one is “empty” because its explicit lack of inner difference takes the overtly negative form of the “void”. The one is “exclusive” because it is being-for-self with a negative “edge” and so shuts out anything other from itself, indeed to such a degree that it initially permits there to be nothing other than it. As *one*, however, it is “affirmative being”, rather than negative, and so distinct from its own inner void. Moreover, since it differs by excluding, it must *exclude* that void from itself and set it “*outside* the affirmative one”. At the same time, as being-for-self the one must continue to relate to *itself* in differing from the void outside it; so that void must itself be another *one*. This second one in turn must undergo the same dialectic, as must every subsequent one, so the one generates, not just one other one, but a *multiplicity* of other ones. There must be many ones, therefore, because the one, by itself, actively differentiates itself from its own void and in so doing duplicates itself, and this is true of every one (SL 133-6 / LS 169-71).¹³

In Plato's account, by contrast – as Hegel presents it – the one does not prove to be many purely through being *one*. Plato begins, rather, from the assertion that “the one *is*”, in which the one is distinguished from the start from its “being”. It is this distinction that then introduces multiplicity into the one. As Hegel puts it, “in saying ‘one’ I already say ‘many’”, since the dialectic “starts out from a conjunction of two categories – the one, and being” (LHP 2: 207 / VGP 3: 36). Hegel glosses over the logic that takes us from “two” to “many”, but this is spelt out clearly by Plato himself. As Plato (or, rather, in the dialogue, Parmenides) states, the one and its being are distinct, but the one, or “unity”, cannot “cease to be part of being or being to be a part of unity”. The one and its being, as distinct from one another, thus each have unity and being as their distinct parts, and so do those parts in turn, and their parts and so on, with the result that the “existent one” from which we start “would be infinite in number”.¹⁴

Klaus Düsing argues, in my view correctly, that Hegel fails to distinguish this “eleatic dialectic”, set out by Parmenides in the dialogue, from “Plato's own dialectic of ideas”.¹⁵ The dialectic of the one and many in Plato's text is not, as Hegel appears to believe, Plato's own dialectical argument that he himself endorses, but a paradoxical hypothesis put forward by his Parmenides in order to challenge the listener to resolve it or (in Düsing's words) to “see through” it.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the differences between this hypothetical argument and Hegel's are instructive. In the Platonic-Parmenidean argument (viewed from a Hegelian perspective), the many are not derived immanently from the one alone, but are effectively presupposed in the difference contained in the proposition “the one *is*”. The one does not therefore differentiate *itself* into many; the latter arises because the one and its being are from the start distinct from one another, but each is also separately the combination of the distinct moments of unity and being, and so is each of these moments, and so on.

Furthermore, the many have their ground in the difference between two positives, the one and its being, not in the difference between the affirmative one and its own, wholly negative, void. It is thus not made clear in Plato's *Parmenides*, as it is in the *Logic*, that the one becomes many, not simply through a difference that attaches to it, but thanks to its *own negation* – the utter negative that is itself in another form. In this sense, we might say, from a Hegelian perspective, that while the dialectic set out in Plato's dialogue is “negative”, since it undermines oppositions but does not lead directly to further truths, it is also not *negative* enough.¹⁷

REPULSION

As noted earlier, the logical process whereby the one expels its own emptiness from itself as another one – and that one then does the same – is characterized by Hegel as the “becoming” of many ones. Hegel points out, however, that in

this process no becoming in the strict sense occurs, for there is no *transition* from being into nothing or from nothing into being, nor is there any change from something into something else. What occurs, in Hegel's words, is that the one "becomes only a *one*" (*wird nur zu Eins*) (or, as Anton Friedrich Koch puts it, the becoming of many ones is just "a continuous logical cloning").¹⁸ Yet these words of Hegel's are still slightly misleading, for the first one does not simply *become*, or turn into, the second one; rather, it *produces* the latter from within itself. It does so by distinguishing itself from, and setting itself outside, itself – initially in the form of the void but then in the form of the one. In other words, the one produces another one by excluding itself from itself; or, as Hegel puts it, "the one repels itself *from itself*". The logical process in which the one gives rise to many other ones is thus named by Hegel "repulsion" (*Repulsion*) (SL 136 / LS 172).¹⁹

Through such repulsion the one ceases being just one and comes to stand outside itself in the form of other ones. Repulsion is thus "the one's own coming-out-of-itself [*Außersichkommen*], but to such outside it as are themselves only ones". Hegel notes, however, that there is also a second form of repulsion that consists, not in the generation of many ones, but in the mutual repelling of ones that are "already *present*" (*schon vorhanden*). Indeed, he argues, the first form of repulsion itself leads to the second. We must now consider why this should be.

The point to note is that, although the many ones are produced or posited by the logic inherent in the one, "the becoming of the many, or their being produced, immediately vanishes" (SL 136 / LS 172). That is to say, as soon as they have been generated, the many cease being entities that have been *generated*. This is because they are precisely *ones*, and the one as such neither comes into being nor owes its being to another, but is immediate being that is wholly self-relating and unchangeable: as Hegel writes, the ones "relate infinitely to themselves". This is not to deny that, logically, the one makes other ones necessary, and so posits them; but the ones it makes necessary are, *as ones*, beings that are there quite independently of anything else. Paradoxically, therefore, they are posited – by the one – as being there *already*; that is, they are "posited as *not* posited". This positing of something as being there already is named by Hegel "pre-positing" or "presupposing". The one's positing of the other ones thus turns into, or turns out to be, the *presupposing* of their independent, immediate being. Furthermore, since each one is a one, each must presuppose the others. All the ones, therefore, are "*presupposed* with respect to each other".

Now the initial positing of other ones by the one is the process of repulsion, since the one sets those others *outside* the space of its self-relation. The presupposing that that positing has now turned into is also a form of repulsion, since it, too, keeps the others *outside* the one. It presupposes those others as

self-relating ones that stand quite apart from the one that presupposes them. Such presupposing, however, is the second repulsion mentioned above, not the first: for it does not give rise to other ones, but holds at bay ones that are “already *present*”. The first repulsion thus leads directly to the second because the positing of the many ones leads logically to their being presupposed, that is, because the initial one makes necessary other ones that, as such, are immediately self-relating and so *already* there.

Note that Hegel talks here of the one “positing” the many and of the many “presupposing” one another, as well as of repulsion; but these two terms, though drawn from the logic of essence, do not refer to anything beyond the two forms of *repulsion* themselves. Hegel is not claiming, therefore, that the one “posits” and “presupposes” other ones in the manner in which this occurs in the doctrine of essence itself. In the latter, positing and presupposing as such are the work of pure *negativity* or what Hegel calls “reflexion”.²⁰ Repulsion, by contrast, is the work of the one that is negative and empty but also immediately self-relating *being*. It is this work of the one, not of reflexion, that Hegel has in mind when he talks of the one “positing” and “presupposing” other ones. Despite appearances, therefore, the dialectic is moved forward here, not by concepts illegitimately imported from the later doctrine of essence, but purely by the logical structure of the one.

The fact that the many ones are all *ones* has a further consequence that Hegel now brings into focus. Insofar as the many are *many* (*viele*), they are other than, and so stand in relation to, one another. Insofar as they are many *ones*, however, each remains wholly self-relating and, as such, is quite *unrelated* to anything else. Every something is explicitly other-related and so has both a determination and constitution; a one, by contrast, is precisely that which is not other-related, but infinitely self-relating and closed in on itself. As one of many, it is, indeed, other than the other ones, but other-relatedness, or being-other, is not explicitly built into its being *one*. Yet if being-other is not built into being one, then neither is being-one-of-*many*, for the latter entails the former. This leads to a paradoxical result: the one, as one, must be one of many, but the fact that it is one of many is not, and cannot be, an explicit part of being one. Every one, as *one*, therefore, is utterly indifferent to its being one of many; or, in Hegel’s words, “that the ones are others to one another, are brought together in the determinacy of plurality [*Vielheit*], does not therefore concern the ones” (SL 136 / LS 172). Every one for itself is purely and simply one, so the fact that it is one of many is what Hegel calls a “completely external determination”. This does not mean that it is contingent; but it is a determination, made necessary by the one, that does not belong to or affect the one itself.²¹

Note that the many ones are not just many, and so other than one another, *for us*; the many are what there actually *is*. Being-many, and so being related to other ones, is thus a way of being, just like being something, or being finite. Yet

it is a way of being that does not belong to the ones themselves and to which they are indifferent. It is thus external to the ones. This means, somewhat bizarrely, that the *relation* between the ones in which they are “many” must be logically and ontologically separate from the ones themselves; in other words, the one *repels* from itself its own relation to other ones, just as it repels those ones themselves. So how, more precisely, is that relation to be understood?

Since the many ones are purely self-relating, their *relation* to one another can only be that of “absolute unrelatedness” (*absolute Beziehungslosigkeit*); that is to say, they relate to one another by being indifferent to one another (SL 137 / LS 173).²² So, having just seen that the ones, *as ones*, are indifferent to their being related, as many, at all, we now see that their *relation* itself consists in unrelatedness and indifference to one another. The consequence of taking these two ideas together is that the ones, in being self-enclosed, must be indifferent to their very relation of mutual indifference. This does not mean, however, that there is in fact no distinction between their being ones and their being related (since both involve “indifference”). The ones are ones, and so are indifferent to their relation, because they are *affirmatively* self-relating beings. Their relation itself, by contrast, turns out to have an explicitly *negative* character.

The many ones are of necessity other than and so related to one another. That relation is not just an illusion, but belongs to the ones’ being many, and so in that sense is real and positive. The relation, however, is not a direct relation in which the ones affect one another; it is a difference between them that is *not* an explicit differing and that makes *no* difference to what they are. The relation and difference between the ones are, therefore, present only insofar as they (the relation and difference) are *negated*; that is to say, they are present only as explicit *unrelatedness* and the explicit *absence* of meaningful differing.

Now, as noted above, the ones are indifferent to the manner of their relation – to their being *many* – and, indeed, repel the latter as something that is external to them. Logically, therefore (as also just noted), they must be indifferent to the explicit unrelatedness and indifference in which their relation consists, and the latter must fall outside, and be separate from, the ones themselves. The ones are certainly unrelated as self-relating ones, but their very unrelatedness must also have a being of its own outside them. As we saw earlier (1: 259), the explicit lack of difference and determinacy within the one is the *void* (*das Leere*) – a void that also falls outside and surrounds the one. Now we have the explicit lack of difference and determinacy once again, this time between the ones in the form of their explicit *unrelatedness*. Such unrelatedness must, therefore, be present outside the ones as the *void* between them. This is a difficult but important idea. The void is the emptiness around and between the ones. It is not, however, just nothing, but is the explicit absence of any direct relation between the ones (or, perhaps, the empty presence of their lack of relation). The lack of relation between ones, as we have seen, is the distinctive form of

their *relation* to one another. The void, which is this lack of relation rendered explicit, must thus relate and connect the ones to one another. Yet its very emptiness *negates* any relation between them. It thus connects them, only by holding them apart as utterly unrelated. (This void, by the way, can take a material form in nature – as the vacuum of space – but it need not do so. It is simply the empty unrelatedness that separates any things, including human beings, insofar as they are, or take themselves to be, pure and simple ones. As already suggested, we can all find ourselves in a logical void, if we isolate ourselves from others.)

Logically, therefore, the many ones must abide in the void, as the ancient atomists contended. This is because the void between the ones *is* their very unrelatedness, conceived as that which falls outside them and to which they are indifferent. Now insofar as the void is external to the ones, it is where the ones themselves *are not*; it is the non-being between them in which none is present. As such, however, it is necessarily the *limit* (*Grenze*) of all the ones. This limit differs significantly from the limit of finite things. The limit of the latter belongs to what they are and confers determinacy on them. The one, however, is not a finite, limited thing, but is infinitely self-relating being (even though it is finite things that prove to be “ones” in the sense being unfolded here [see 1: 249]). The limit of all the ones does not, therefore, belong to the ones themselves: it is not part of their being. It is the utter non-being, or void, that falls outside and between the ones. “The void”, Hegel writes, “is determined as pure non-being, and this alone constitutes the limit of the ones” (SL 137 / LS 173).

One might think that the one, as infinite, has no limit; yet that is not true. As we saw earlier, the one as such is defined and limited by the fact that it has no moments. It has this limit, however, purely within itself – not, like the finite, in relation to something else – and so it is “the wholly abstract limit of itself” (SL 132 / LS 166). This limit does not, therefore, prevent the one from being purely self-relating being; that is, it does not limit the one in a way that would make it finite. In that sense it is a limit that is not actually a limit on the one. We have now seen that the one has a limit in a second sense, namely in the void that lies between it and the other ones. Once again, this limit does not limit the one directly and turn it into a finite, limited thing. In this case, however, this is because the limit lies *outside*, rather than *within*, the purely self-relating one. It turns out, therefore, that the idea of the limit is inseparable from that of the one. Such a limit is, however, a self-negating limit: for it is a limit that is not actually a limit on the one at all. It is a necessary limit, but one that coexists with the one’s being infinitely self-relating and, in that sense, with its *not* being limited. This idea of a limit that is not a limit will play an important role when we reach the sphere of quantity – a sphere that is itself made necessary by the one.

Despite being one of many and so related to other ones and also having a limit, the one thus remains *infinitely* self-relating. Indeed, it must do so, since it

is the “immediacy of the infinite” itself. The one is the infinite, not as becoming, and not even just as being-for-self, but as immediately self-relating being. The many ones, therefore, are what Hegel calls “*infinity that has come out of itself*”: they are infinity that has become *external* to, and *other* than, itself (SL 137 / LS 173). The true infinite began as a process of its own, with finite moments but with no *other*. It then took the form of being rather than becoming – being-for-self – again with its own moment (being-for-one) but with no other. Then it mutated logically into immediate being-for-self, or the *one*, without internal moments or an other outside it. As the one, however, the true infinite then sets itself outside itself, and multiplies itself into *many* ones, in the way we have seen: it comes “out of itself”. In doing so, it takes on a contradictory character: for it is the pure and simple *one* (and so is infinitely self-relating), and yet it is also one of *many* (and so is not just infinitely self-relating but related to other ones), and yet each of those many is itself a pure and simple one (and so is infinitely self-relating after all). “The plurality of the ones” is thus not just a given that we happen to encounter in thought or intuition, in logic or nature. It is, in Hegel’s words, “infinity as a contradiction that produces itself naturally [*unbefangen*]”, all on its own (SL 137 / LS 173).

THE EXCLUSION OF THE ONE

The many ones, then, are self-relating beings, whose relation to one another is that of indifference and non-relation. Indeed, the ones even set themselves apart from their very relation of non-relation; the latter thus falls outside them as the void that keeps them apart.²³ Yet the many ones are not in fact simply unrelated, because they preserve their separateness and lack of relation by *repelling* one another: each finds the others to be immediately there before it and each *excludes* those others from itself.

This moment of exclusion is integral to being one. The one is not just simple self-relation, but it is self-relating determinacy. As such, it has a definite, *determinate* character and so is “this, *not* that”. Its self-relation is thus not just innocent and naive, but, as I noted above, it has a negative “edge” (see 1: 258). Consequently, it actively negates and shuts out anything else. To begin with, the one shuts out anything else absolutely and has no other at all; it is thus purely itself. Now, however, the one is surrounded by many other ones. As a self-relating one, therefore, it must actively shut out and repel those others.

A mere something (*Etwas*) is also a self-relating determinacy; in that case, however, being self-related and being determinate coexist in such a way that something is both self-related and *other*-related, though in different respects. Accordingly, it is open to being changed by the other to which it relates. In the case of the one, however, the moment of determinacy – of being this, *not* that – coincides completely with, and so is in fact subordinate to, the infinite self-

relation of the one. It serves, therefore, not to connect the one with something else and so expose it to change, but to preserve and reinforce its pure self-relation. Determinacy does so by joining with such self-relation to repel and exclude everything else *from* the one. Note that repulsion and exclusion are not the work of mere self-relation, or mere determinacy and negation, taken separately. They are the product of the combination of the two. The one excludes other ones because it is wholly self-relating being *as* the negation of what is other.

As we will now see, however, repulsion and exclusion are in fact at odds with the wholly self-relating – and so *unrelated* – ones they are meant to preserve. The problem is, quite simply, that the “mutual” repulsion of the ones constitutes the “*common relation*” between them (SL 138 / LS 174).²⁴ This is because repulsion and exclusion contain the moment of *negation*, and the latter is itself a relation: it is the negation of . . . (see 1: 180). The many ones reinforce their pure self-relation and lack of relation to one another by repelling and excluding one another; precisely by doing so, however, they set themselves in direct relation *to* one another. They are thus related to one another after all, and so are not the sheer being-for-self that they are meant to be.

Each one, as one, is empty, abstract being-for-self. Their mutual repulsion, however, converts each one into a *determinate* being (*Dasein*) that has its being in *not* being – in differing from, and so relating to – the others. As Hegel puts it, repulsion is the ones’ “own distinguishing which preserves them” (SL 138 / LS 174), but it thereby turns each into one side of a difference. The ones thus cease being pure being-for-self, or one, and become *moments* of their relation of mutual repulsion, that is, being-for-one.

Yet such mutual repulsion or exclusion does not reduce the ones to *mere* moments, such as we encountered earlier (in 1.1.3.A.b). When being-for-self is first conceived in relation to its moment, being-for-one, it is itself reduced to a mere moment, because it is no longer for itself at all. The case of the ones, however, is different: for each excludes the others by being a *one*, and in so doing pushes the others away as separate *ones*. Such mutual exclusion certainly sets the ones in relation to one another; yet it does not reduce them to mere moments of that relation, for it relates them, as ones, to other *ones*. In excluding one another, therefore, the ones become moments of their relation, or being-for-one, but “being-for-one, as it has been determined in exclusion, is [. . .] a being-for-other [*Sein-für-Anderes*]”, or other-relatedness: the relation to ones that are *other ones* (SL 138 / LS 175).

Such other-relatedness, however, remains at odds with the pure *self*-relation or being-for-self that exclusion aims to constitute. The ones must, therefore, also exclude this moment of other-relatedness from themselves if they are to preserve their pure being-for-self. Hegel summarizes the movement of exclusion and repulsion as follows:

The being-for-self of the many ones thus shows itself to be their self-preservation through the mediation of their mutual repulsion in which they sublate themselves reciprocally and posit the others as a mere being-for-other. But the self-preservation consists at the same time in repelling this ideality and positing the ones as not being-for-an-other.

—SL 138 / LS 175

Hegel then notes, however, that, construed in this way, repulsion and exclusion necessarily fail to achieve their aim, for they are logically unable to preserve the ones *as ones*.

“The ones not only *are*”, Hegel writes, “but maintain themselves through their reciprocal exclusion” (SL 138 / LS 175). In excluding one another, however, as we have just seen, they reciprocally negate or “sublate” one another by turning one another, and themselves, into ones-in-relation, or other-related ones. To preserve themselves as ones, therefore, the ones have at the same time to “keep this their ideality, their negatedness away from themselves” and thereby to “negate the reciprocal negating”: in excluding one another, they also have to set themselves apart from the other-relatedness to which they reduce themselves *by* excluding one another (SL 139 / LS 176). To put this another way, the ones must exclude not only one another but also their very excluding *of* one another, for only in this way will they preserve their pure being-for-self. Exclusion thus shows itself to be a complex process that secures the separateness at which it aims only by disavowing itself.

Yet the ones are *ones*, rather than mere self-relating somethings, only insofar as they are *exclusive* and so exclude one another: “they are only inasmuch as they negate” (SL 139 / LS 176). To the extent that they disavow and stand apart from their own negating of one another, therefore, they *cease being ones*; or, as Hegel puts it, “since this their negating is negated, their being is negated”. This problem besetting the ones is insuperable, and stems from the fact that the one, by its nature, is being-for-self, but also determinate, negative and so *relational*. The moment of negation and relationality is initially contained within the self-relation of the one, which turns away from itself “towards another” but is then “returned into itself” by the fact that it has no other. It then falls outside the ones as the empty unrelatedness, or void, that lies between them (SL 133, 136-7 / LS 168, 173). In neither case, therefore, does the fact that negation and relationality are inseparable from the one turn it into an overtly relational entity itself. The ones *are* turned into overtly relational entities, however, by the fact that they preserve themselves *as* ones by actively repelling and excluding other ones. In this respect, the one is being-for-self only in and as the direct – negative – *relation* to its counterparts; or, in Hegel’s words, “only through the negating of the others do the ones return into themselves” (SL 139 / LS 176). To the extent, therefore, that the ones also *negate* their own negating of one

another, and set themselves apart from their mutual excluding, they are no longer *ones*, but at best mere somethings.

If such ones are to preserve their identities as *ones*, therefore, they cannot utterly negate and separate themselves from their repulsion and exclusion of one another, but they must also repel and exclude one another explicitly and unambiguously. Accordingly, they can be ones only insofar as they are, explicitly, *ones-in-relation*. This, however, brings about a dramatic transformation of their relation itself, which can no longer just be that of repulsion and exclusion.

ATTRACTION

As we have seen, mutual repulsion does not reduce the ones to mere moments, to mere being-for-one, but it turns them into other-related ones. “Repulsion is itself a relating”, Hegel writes (SL 139 / LS 176), and as such it prevents the ones from being purely self-related; yet it is at the same time a relation between *ones*. In repelling and excluding one another, therefore, the ones remain ones, even though they are inextricably related and bound to one another: they are *other-related ones*. Indeed, it is only by being other-related – being bound to one another through mutual repulsion – that they can be ones at all. This fact has a significant consequence, which Hegel now goes on to explain.

As noted, the ones do not just stand apart from one another, but they are also directly interrelated by their mutual repulsion. In repelling one another, however, they do not just relate to entities that are *other* than they are. This is because each one is the same bare one as all the others. Each one, therefore, relates to *itself* in the others that it repels: “the one which excludes the ones relates itself to them, to the ones, that is, to itself” (SL 139 / LS 176). Each one, in relating to another one, thus unites with itself and constitutes *self-relating* being. Repulsion, or “the negative relating [*Verhalten*] of the ones to one another”, is thus not pure repulsion, but is just as much the “*going-together-with-self*” (*Mit-sich-Zusammengehen*) of the one.

Since each one relates to itself in another one, two ones in relation prove to be *one* self-relating one. Yet each one relates to itself, and so constitutes self-relating being, in just the same way in relating to two or three others; in these cases, therefore, three or four ones in relation prove to be one self-relating one. Equally, each one relates to itself, and so constitutes self-relating being, in relating to *all* the others; and, in this case, all the ones in relation prove to be one self-relating one. The point to note here, therefore, is not that each pair of ones constitutes a separate instance of the same self-relation, but that all the ones together constitute *one* self-relating one.

In so doing, Hegel notes, they cease being simply different and external to one another and come together to form a unity or “identity”. This “self-positing of the many ones into a single one” (*sich in-Ein-Eines-Setzen der vielen Eins*) is

what Hegel calls “*attraction*”. The ones thus not only *repel* one another, but in so doing they also come together, and so *attract* one another, to form one self-relating being.

At this point in the text Hegel calls this self-relating being an *Eines*, rather than an *Eins*. A couple of pages later, however, he talks of the “*Eins* of attraction” (SL 141 / LS 178-9). The self-relating being constituted by the mutual attraction of the ones is itself an *Eins* (or one in the strong sense we have been considering), rather than a mere *Eines* (or unity), because, like the original one, it consists in *immediate* self-relation. The one does not relate to, and so unite with itself, in and through something quite different from and other than itself, as the finite goes together with itself in the infinite beyond it; but the one unites immediately with itself in another *one*, just as earlier being-for-one unites immediately with itself. The self-relating being that the ones constitute is thus itself *one*.

Yet this new “one of attraction” differs in an important respect from the pure and simple one. The latter arises as being-for-one, or being-a-moment, *ceases* being a moment and becomes self-relating being. The simple one that results thus has no internal moments and so is empty and abstract. The new one, on the other hand, arises as this first, simple one relates to itself in all the other ones. In contrast to being-for-one, this simple one does not cease being itself through relating to itself in the others to which it relates, but it comes to be itself, to be one, in a new sense. Accordingly, the many ones do not simply disappear as they come together to constitute this new one, but they remain the ones that they are. And yet, though they are still ones, they are no longer wholly external to one another, precisely because they come together to constitute one self-relating being. The many ones are thus *moments* of the “one [*Eins*] of attraction”, which is itself a unity – an *Eines* – of ones.

ATTRACTION AND REPULSION

Let us review what we have just learned. The one proves to be one among many ones. These ones are immediately self-relating, but they preserve themselves as ones by repelling one another. Such repulsion (or exclusion) is a necessary relation between ones. It is, however, a relation in which the ones also negate their own relatedness. The ones must repel one another in order to be for themselves alone and so self-relating ones; but, equally, they can be purely for themselves and stand quite apart from one another only by *repelling* – and so negating – their very repelling of, and relation to, one another. Yet in standing quite apart from one another the ones are no longer *exclusive* unities, but are just self-relating somethings. They are thus no longer ones in the strict sense. To be *ones*, therefore, they cannot just stand apart, but they must also repel one another in a way that keeps them negatively *related to* one another. Conceived in this way, however, repulsion makes attraction logically necessary: for in

relating negatively to other *ones*, the one relates to *itself* in those ones and thereby forms one self-relating being. Indeed, all the ones come together to form one self-relating being. In Hegel's words, therefore, "repulsion passes over into attraction, the many ones into one one [*die vielen Eins in ein Eins*]" (SL 141 / LS 178).

Attraction, like repulsion, is a *relation* between ones. Yet whereas repulsion is a relation that seeks not to be a relation, attraction is the overt and unequivocal relatedness of the ones. It is the relation in which the ones do not set themselves apart from one another, but *come together* to form a new one. Since the ones are explicitly connected in attraction, they are explicitly "ideal" moments of their relation. This is not to say that they are mere moments, or mere being-for-one, but they are ones-in-relation and so in that sense are moments. Attraction is thus the "posited ideality" of the ones – their explicit *not-just-being-separate-from-one-another* (SL 141 / LS 178). Repulsion is also a relation between the ones and so also turns the ones into moments. In this case, however, the ones are moments, not because they form an explicit unity, but because they are *exclusive*, that is, separate and self-relating but with a negative "edge". As such, the ones are determinate and "real". Repulsion is thus not the overt ideality of the ones, but their "reality" (in Hegel's technical sense).²⁵

Repulsion and attraction are, therefore, qualitatively distinct from one another (even though the former makes the latter logically necessary): whereas attraction is the ones-in-*relation*, repulsion is, rather, the *ones-in-relation*. It soon becomes clear, however, that repulsion is the indispensable presupposition of attraction: for "if there were no ones, there would be nothing to attract", and it is through repulsion that the ones are ones. The ones, as we have seen, are "ideal" moments of attraction. They are moments, however, as *ones*; and they are ones only through repelling one another. Accordingly, "attraction is inseparable from repulsion"; indeed, it must contain the latter within itself (SL 141 / LS 178).

The fact that the ones are moments of attraction means, as we noted above, that they are also moments of the *one* that arises through attraction. Repulsion is the relation through which there are many ones; but attraction is the relation between these many through which there is *one* one: it is the coming together of the many ones to form the new "one of attraction". This new one is thus posited by the many ones and so has them as its moments. Yet, as a one of its own, it also differs from them: attraction is "a *positing* of a one distinct from the other ones" (SL 141 / LS 178). Indeed, it is precisely the fact that the new one is posited by the many ones that differentiates it *from* them.

The many ones are, as ones, abstract and empty: their determinate character consists in being utterly indeterminate. The new one, by contrast, is not just empty and abstract, but is "determined as the mediated one": it is "the *one posited as one*" (*das als Eins gesetzte Eins*) (SL 141 / LS 179). The new one is

still a one, since it is infinitely self-relating being with a determinate character. Yet its determinacy does not consist in the sheer lack of determinacy, or the void, like that of the many ones, for it is mediated *by* those many ones and contains this “mediation within itself as *its determination* [*Bestimmung*]”; that is to say, its being mediated by the many ones constitutes its distinguishing quality. As a consequence, Hegel writes, the one of attraction “does not swallow up [*verschlingen*] the attracted ones into itself as into a point, that is, it does not sublate them abstractly”; rather, it “preserves the ones as many in it”. There is, therefore, a clear difference between the one of attraction and the many ones: for the latter are empty, whereas the former is full of those many empty ones. Since, however, the many ones belong to the one of attraction, this one, though different from the many, is not something separate from them. The many ones are, rather, necessary *moments* of the one of attraction, and this in turn is the unity *of* the many ones. Furthermore, since the many ones are ones by virtue of repulsion, the new one also contains “the unity of repulsion and attraction as such” (SL 141-2 / LS 179).

At the end of his whole account of being-for-self, Hegel notes that “attraction and repulsion, as is well known, are usually regarded as *forces* [*Kräfte*]”, specifically forces found in, or found to be constitutive of, *matter* (SL 145 / LS 184).²⁶ It is important to recognize, however, that attraction and repulsion are conceived in the *Logic* in complete abstraction from the idea of force, which is discussed later in the doctrine of essence, and from the idea of matter, which emerges in its concrete, spatio-temporal sense only in the philosophy of nature. In the *Logic* they are understood simply to be relations between ones and to follow from the very nature of the one itself.²⁷

Being one, we recall, is a distinctive kind of quality, or a certain *way* of being. Being entails being determinate, being something, being finite, being infinite and also being one, and each way of being has its distinctive character. The distinctive character of the one is what we have been examining in this chapter. This entails various different but related features, which together constitute what it is *to be one*. Each feature is thus itself a certain quality of the one, or a certain way of being one. It is what and how the one must be. To recapitulate, these features include the following. The one as such is an empty self-relating being, surrounded by the void. Yet it is also one of many that, as indifferent ones, are also separated by the void. Yet the one is not just indifferent to the other ones, but asserts itself as one by directly repelling the others and holding them at bay. Lastly, the ones do not just repel one another, but precisely in doing so they come together to form a new one with the other ones around them; that is to say, they combine to form a unity of ones: the one of attraction. Repulsion and attraction are thus not “forces” exercised by one one on another one; they are simply relations that are built in logically to being one. A one by its nature repels other ones and thereby preserves itself as one; yet, at the same

time, ones come together – attract one another – to form a unity of ones. This follows from the quality of being one as such, just as it follows from being something that it is related to something else. In his philosophy of nature, Hegel will argue that matter also involves repulsion and attraction (EN 44 / 60-1 [§ 262]). In the *Logic*, however, it is logical necessity alone that concerns us: how and why simple ones as such must, logically, both repel and attract one another.²⁸

THE MUTUAL PRESUPPOSING OF REPULSION AND ATTRACTION

The difference between the one and the many has now mutated logically into the relation between the two different relations between ones: repulsion and attraction (SL 142 / LS 179). These two relations are connected to one another because repulsion makes attraction necessary, and attraction presupposes and contains repulsion. Yet they are also *different* relations; indeed, Hegel remarks, each “stands at first outside the other on its own”. The reason why is that repulsion gives rise to attraction by virtue of being simple *repulsion* – repulsion that does not itself presuppose attraction. Such simple repulsion is, indeed, in itself quite “indifferent to attraction”, which it thus sets outside it as a separate relation between ones. “In this way”, Hegel writes, “we have repulsion abstractly for itself, and similarly attraction relative to the ones as *affirmative beings* [*Seiende*] has the side of an immediate determinate being and comes to them by itself as an other” (SL 142 / LS 179). Hegel now shows, however, that repulsion, taken by itself, is *not* just itself after all, but in fact presupposes attraction (just as attraction presupposes it).

Repulsion by itself, Hegel notes, is the “dispersing” (*Zerstreuung*) of the many ones so that they are quite separate from one another – so separate, indeed, that they are quite unrelated and do not actually *repel* and *exclude* one another any more. In other words, repulsion disperses the ones to such a degree that it places them “outside the sphere of repulsion itself” and thereby brings its own activity to an end (SL 142 / LS 180).²⁹ Yet in so doing, repulsion deprives the ones of the exclusive character that makes them *ones*. If, therefore, repulsion is to separate ones from one another *as ones*, it must not go so far as to suspend utterly its own activity: it must remain the repulsion and exclusion *of* one one *by* another. This means, however, that it must keep the ones in contact with one another, so that they can exclude one another: in doing its work repulsion must remain a negative *relation* and *connection* between ones. Repulsion and exclusion free ones from one another *as ones*, therefore, only by (more or less explicitly) binding them to one another.

This is an important logical insight that has significant implications for human life: “mutual repulsion [*Abhalten*] and flight is not the liberation from

what is repelled and fled from; the one that excludes [*das Ausschließende*] still remains *connected to that which* is excluded by it”.³⁰ This is not to say that repulsion as such can never occur, but rather that it can never be pure repulsion (if it is not to suspend itself, and the ones, altogether). Repulsion – that actually does its work – does push the many ones away from one another and so establish them as ones; but at the same time it connects them and draws them together (to some degree). Indeed, doing the latter is the indispensable condition of doing the former: for the ones cannot repel one another, *unless* they draw together to push one another away. Such drawing together, Hegel notes, is *attraction*, which thus proves to be an irreducible moment in, and presupposition of, repulsion itself. Thus, “it has been established that it is not just repulsion which is presupposed by attraction, but that there is equally present also a reverse connection of repulsion to attraction and the former equally has its presupposition in the latter” (SL 142 / LS 180).

It turns out, therefore, that attraction and repulsion presuppose, and contain, one another, and that “each is through the mediation of the *other* as *other*”. Each is, indeed, different from the other; yet “attraction too is attraction only *through the mediation* of repulsion, just as repulsion is repulsion through the mediation of attraction” (SL 143 / LS 180). This, however, is only part of the story, for repulsion and attraction not only presuppose one another, but each also presupposes *itself*. Let us consider each in turn.

Repulsion is the relation between ones through which they hold one another at bay. These ones, as ones, are immediately self-relating beings, and so are already “*present*” (*vorhanden*) prior to repelling one another (SL 143 / LS 181). As such, they constitute the presupposition of repulsion. Repulsion, therefore, is a relation between ones that are already there, and so it takes the form of the second repulsion we encountered above, or what Hegel here calls “relative repulsion”. Yet it is also the case that the ones are ones in the first place only *through* repulsion. On the one hand, they arise because the initial one repels the void from itself as another one, and then this one does the same, and so on, generating many ones. On the other hand, they owe their existence or “*being*” (*Sein*) as ones to repulsion: for they can be *ones* at all – that is, self-relating, *exclusive* entities – only insofar as they repel or exclude one another.³¹ The ones that are presupposed by repulsion are thus themselves the product of repulsion. Repulsion, therefore, “relates itself throughout only to itself” in the ones that it presupposes and so in fact presupposes only itself. As Hegel puts it, “any presupposition that it would have is only its own positing”.

In contrast to repulsion, attraction is the coming together of the ones to form a single one. In coming together in this way, the ones cease being wholly external to one another and become *moments* of both the process of attraction and the one to which it leads. In Hegel’s words, “attraction is the positing of the one as such, of the real [*reell*] one” – the one of attraction – “with respect

to which the many in their determinate being are determined only as ideal [*ideell*]" (SL 143 / LS 181). Such attraction presupposes the many ones themselves and the repulsion through which they are many *ones*. Repulsion itself, however, presupposes attraction, since it is only by drawing together – rather than being completely dispersed – that they can directly repel *one another*. In presupposing the many ones and repulsion, therefore, attraction necessarily presupposes itself. The ones thus do not first become moments, and so “attain ideality”, through the attraction that differs from repulsion. They already exhibit ideality because of the attraction *in* repulsion. This latter attraction, therefore, is itself the precondition of their coming together – through attraction – to form a one of many ones.³²

So both repulsion and attraction presuppose themselves. Each is thus “for itself”, or a relation between ones that is itself self-relating. Yet, while each presupposes, and so relates to, itself, each – as we have seen – also “contains within itself the other as a moment”. Repulsion presupposes repulsion, but it also presupposes, and so contains, attraction; and attraction presupposes attraction, but it also presupposes, and so contains, repulsion. In presupposing, and relating to, *itself*, therefore, each presupposes, and relates to, the *other* at the same time. Indeed, each presupposes itself *in* presupposing the other, since each is presupposed by, and contained in, the other it presupposes. Self-relation and other-relatedness thus coincide completely here (SL 143-4 / LS 181).³³

Such coincidence differs subtly from anything similar we have encountered before. In true infinity, for example, the finite and the bad infinite also relate to themselves in relating to their other or “negation” (SL 117 / LS 147). Yet neither relates to itself and the other *at the same time* – so neither relates *immediately* to itself in the other – since each relates to itself only insofar as the other is *not* just the other that it is. The finite continues in the bad infinite only because the latter renders itself *finite*; insofar as the bad infinite is *infinite*, therefore, the finite does not relate to itself and continue itself in it. Similarly, the infinite continues itself in and through the finite that it becomes, only because the latter points beyond itself to a new *infinite*; insofar as that finite is *finite*, therefore, the infinite does not continue itself in it. This reflects the fact that, despite their intimate connection, the finite and bad infinite are opposed, and so finite, determinations.

The one, by contrast, is immediately self-relating and infinite, rather than finite. Its relation to its other is thus at the same time its immediate relation to *itself*. Accordingly, the exterior void to which it relates is simply another *one*; and in repelling other ones, it goes together with *itself* in those others to form one self-relating being, namely the one of attraction. Note that the one, so conceived, is not just self-enclosed, but relates to itself in *other* ones. Since these ones, however, are all *ones*, they are not other than, or the negation of, one another in the explicit way the finite and the bad infinite are. Accordingly, the

difference between the latter and the one can be expressed through the following shift of emphasis: whereas the finite and bad infinite relate to themselves through their *other*, the one relates directly to *itself* in its other.

The relation between repulsion and attraction differs from what we see in either true infinity or the self-relating one. Repulsion and attraction are initially independent of one another, because repulsion at first does not presuppose attraction but is purely “for itself” (SL 142 / LS 180). They are also qualitatively different relations between ones, insofar as they point in different, indeed opposed, directions, and in this respect they resemble the finite and the bad infinite, rather than the one that is no different from any other one. Unlike the finite and the bad infinite, however, each turns out to relate to itself and the other *at the same time*. This is because each proves to be directly contained *in* the other to which it relates, whereas the finite and bad infinite do not: repulsion is contained *in* attraction itself, whereas finitude is contained in the infinite only insofar as the latter is *not* infinite but finite. Yet the self-relating of repulsion and attraction is not like that of the one, either, for each relates immediately to itself in relating to its explicit *other*, whereas the one relates only to other *ones*. In the self-presupposing of repulsion and attraction, therefore, self-relation and other-relatedness are more intimately fused than at any stage in the development of infinity.

Hegel notes that the distinctive relation between attraction and repulsion is actually prefigured in the relation between the one and the many, when the latter is conceived slightly differently from the way we have just done.³⁴ Insofar as the many are *ones*, each one relates immediately to *itself* in the others. (This is what was highlighted in the paragraph before last.) Yet insofar as the many are *many*, the one does not simply relate to itself in its other, for the many as such are explicitly different from and *other* than the one as such. Furthermore, this difference is qualitative, not quantitative; it is a difference, not just between amounts, but between ways of being: being many and being one. Two amounts may well differ – by being more or less than one another – but insofar as they are both *amounts*, there is no qualitative difference between them. Being one, however, is qualitatively different from, and other than, being many: it is a different way of being.³⁵ In “coming out of itself” to form *many* ones, therefore, the one comes to exhibit a different quality and so is “the positing of itself as its other”; similarly, in coming together, or “collapsing”, to form *one*, the many posits itself “as its other”. Yet the many that the *one* generates continue to be many *ones*, and the one formed by the *many* continues to be a unity of *many*. In turning into one *another*, therefore, the one and the many relate immediately to their own *selves*, “each continuing *itself* in its *other*” (SL 144 / LS 182, emphasis added).

The relation between the one and the many thus anticipates that between repulsion and attraction, in which each is also “the continuity of *itself* in its

other” (emphasis added). There is, however, an added twist to the latter relation that is missing from the former. Not only do repulsion and attraction relate immediately to themselves in their other, but they do so because each *already* contains the other, and so the “negation of itself”, within itself. The one and the many, by contrast, are not quite so intimately bound up with one another. The one as such comes out of itself to form many ones, but it is not many within itself *before* it has come out of itself: as a pure and simple one, it is not already many. Similarly, the many collapse into the one of attraction, but they are not such a one *before* they collapse: as a pure many, they do not already form a unity or one. We can thus say of the one and the many that each relates immediately to itself in the other that it *becomes*, but not in an other that it already contains. Repulsion, by contrast, already contains the moment of attraction within itself, and attraction taken by itself contains the moment of repulsion. This is not to deny that repulsion first stands alone without attraction; yet it turns out that repulsion, as the repelling of *ones*, is in fact not just itself, but presupposes and contains attraction (see 1: 279–80). Repulsion thus not only *becomes* attraction (as the many become one), but it also has a closer connection to the latter: for it already contains attraction, just as attraction contains repulsion. Each continues itself in the other, therefore, because each is contained within the other and contains the other within itself (a fact that, as we shall see in the next chapter, undermines the qualitative difference between them) (see 1: 294–5).

The difference between the one / many relation and the repulsion / attraction relation can thus be put like this. The one relates immediately to itself in the many *ones*, and the many, as a way of being, relates immediately to itself in the one (of attraction) that has the *many* as its moment; yet being one and being many are, as such, *other* than one another (for the reasons set out above). Repulsion also relates immediately to itself in attraction, and attraction relates immediately to itself in repulsion. Yet repulsion and attraction as such are not just other than one another, because each *within itself* already contains the other as its moment.³⁶ The fusion of self and other is thus much more intimate in the case of repulsion and attraction, than it is in the case of the one and the many. With this complex interconnection between repulsion and attraction, we reach the end of the logical development of the one and of being-for-self (see SL 144 / LS 182). Indeed, we reach the end of the development of quality as such and witness the latter’s transformation into quantity.³⁷

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

From Quality to Quantity

The first section of Hegel's logic of being – on quality – sets out how the category of “being” is to be understood, and so what it *is* “to be”, starting from the minimal idea of pure being. In the course of Hegel's account we learn the following: that to be is to be determinate, to be something, to be both something in itself and other-related, to be limited and finite, to be infinite (by relating to oneself in the other), to be one and thereby also one of many, and, as one, to repel and attract other ones. This does not yet amount to a fully developed picture of the world as we know it, for Hegel has not yet shown that being involves exercising causality, being a mechanical, chemical or organic object, being spatio-temporal or (in certain circumstances) being self-conscious. Nonetheless, Hegel's logic has disclosed the fundamental ways of being (and their corresponding categories) that constitute what it is to be in a *qualitative* sense, and it has demonstrated their logical interconnection. These ways of being have been derived without prior assumptions through simply rendering explicit what is implicit in being itself. In this way, they have been shown to be immanent in being and so necessary, rather than taken for granted uncritically. In this chapter, we will now consider how quality as a whole gives rise immanently to a new sphere of being: *quantity*.

HOW QUALITATIVE BEING BECOMES A MOMENT

There are three principal types of being that together constitute qualitative being. These are pure being, determinate being and self-relating being. Pure being (*reines Sein*) is purely and independently itself with no trace of anything else. Such being, however, immediately vanishes into its opposite, nothing – which itself vanishes into being – and as such vanishing it is *becoming*. Becoming is thus neither pure being, nor pure nothing, but the vanishing of the one *into*

the other: being-that-vanishes-into-nothing, or *ceasing-to-be*, and nothing-that-vanishes-into-being, or *coming-to-be* (SL 80 / LS 99). Note that being proves to be both the process of ceasing-to-be and a “moment” of that process that is inseparable from its opposite, namely *being-that-vanishes-into-nothing*. A moment is that which has lost its purity and independence, but it is not just nothing at all. It is still itself, yet it is not *just* itself – since it is bound to another – and so has been negated or “sublated” (*aufgehoben*). This concept of “moment” plays a crucial role in the *Logic* and it is first introduced with the category of becoming, in which being and nothing “sink from their initially represented *self-subsistence* into *moments* which are *still distinguished* but at the same time sublated” (SL 80 / LS 99).

Determinate being (*Dasein*) also comprises two moments, namely reality and negation. These are moments, however, not because they vanish into one another, but because they are two sides of a single difference. As such, neither is simply itself, but each is bound to the other through negation. Each is thus itself-*not*-the-other – though in reality, as affirmative quality, “the fact is concealed that it contains determinacy and therefore also negation” (SL 85 / LS 105). Reality thus appears to be independent of negation, and vice versa, although each is in fact just as much a moment as the other is.

With self-relating being, or something (*Etwas*), the independence of being is restored and being no longer takes the form of a mere moment. Yet the independence of something differs from that of pure being. The latter is purely itself in being indeterminate; something, on the other hand, is independent because it is *determinate* being that is wholly *self-relating*. Like reality, therefore, something contains determinacy and negation within itself. In contrast to reality, however, it is not just one side of a difference, but it is self-relating negation, or the negation of mere negation. Something does not, of course, simply stand alone, but necessarily has an other. Yet neither something, nor its other, is a mere moment, because each is separate from, and other than, the other, and so is independently itself.

In its further logical development, however, something proves to be explicitly determinate and relational. Specifically, it proves to be explicitly related *to its other*, or what Hegel calls being-for-other. This being-for-other is itself bound together with a thing’s being-in-itself, so that they form two sides of a single difference. Being-for-other and being-in-itself thus constitute the two “moments” of one something (SL 92-3 / LS 114-15).

Yet something and its other do not cease being separate from one another; rather, they prove to be related *to*, and separate *from*, one another at the same time. This unity of relatedness and separateness becomes fully explicit in the idea of a thing’s limit. The limit of a thing, as Hegel understands it, is where the thing stops and another begins, and where the other stops and the thing begins. A thing’s limit is thus its *not*-being-another, and so turns something into a

moment of its explicit difference from an other. Yet at the same time, the limit is the relation and negation through which the thing is *itself* – the self-relating something it is – rather than another. The limit, in other words, is the simple *negation* through which something is at the same time a separate, *self-relating* negation and so the negation of simple negation (see SL 99 / LS 123).

The limited something, as we saw above, proves to be a finite something; and the latter, in its ceasing-to-be, then gives rise to unending, infinite being. Such infinite being, as infinite rather than finite, has no end and is not limited by anything other than it. It is purely self-relating being and so has nothing whatever of a moment to it. Yet, when the negation it contains is rendered explicit, infinite being proves not to be purely self-relating after all, but to be the negation and limit of the finite, and so to be a finite or “bad” infinite (SL 111 / LS 138). As such, it proves to be one side or *moment* of a difference: the moment of infinity in relation to the different moment of finitude. Yet the bad infinite also remains self-relating in its difference from finitude. Its self-relation thus turns it into *something other* than the finite, which in turn is something other than it. The finite and the bad infinite thus prove to be “*relative determinations*” – or moments – that are “attributed an independent [*selbständig*] determinate being” over against one another (SL 113 / LS 141).

In the infinite progress, however, each proves to be the process that Hegel names “true infinity” (SL 118-19 / LS 148-50). This process consists in relating to *oneself* in and through one’s other: the finite relates to itself in the finite that the bad infinite turns out to be, and the bad infinite relates to itself in the infinite to which this finite itself points. Note that in relating to itself in and through the other, each ceases being one side of the difference between them and encompasses both sides. In becoming the *process* of truly infinite self-relation, therefore, each ceases being one *moment* of a difference.

In another sense, however, each proves to be a moment after all, for each comes to be a moment of *the very process* that each constitutes. The process of infinite self-relation preserves the difference between the finite and the bad infinite, since each relates to itself through what is not it, through the *other*. Yet neither is now other than, in the sense of separate from, the other, because each belongs to the self-relating of the other. Each, therefore, must be merely a non-self-subsistent *moment* of the other’s self-relation; indeed, both must be mere moments of the single process of infinite self-relation that both together constitute. Insofar as both are “moments of the process”, Hegel writes, the finite and bad infinite are “*jointly the finite*” (SL 118 / LS 148).

This marks an important point in the development of qualitative being: the point at which *the finite is reduced to a mere moment*. The finite, before true infinity arises, is determinate and limited, and so is always a moment of a difference and a relation. Yet it is not *merely* a moment, but is also a self-subsistent something that is other than and separate from something else (be

that another limited, finite thing or the bad infinite). To be finite is thus to combine two conflicting features: relatedness and separateness, being-a-moment and being self-subsistent. Indeed, this is true of both the finite and the bad infinite prior to the emergence of true infinity.¹ It ceases being true, however, when true infinity emerges: for in relating infinitely to themselves *through* one another, they cease being separate from one another and lose their self-subsistence. They thus become no more than moments of the infinite self-relating that both prove to be. This is not to say that there are now no longer any finite somethings: finite things in relation remain *other* than one another. Yet this is not the whole truth about finite things, for they necessarily give rise to infinite being, and insofar as they constitute a truly infinite process they are merely non-self-subsistent moments of that process. It is at this point in the *Logic*, therefore, that we first encounter moments that are *fully* and *explicitly* moments, without self-subsistence or even the appearance thereof.²

True infinity itself is not a moment of any further process or relation but is infinite self-relation. As a form of *being*, rather than becoming or process, such infinity is what Hegel calls being-for-self; and the finite, conceived as a moment of this being-for-self, is called being-for-one, which just means “being-a-moment-of . . .”. Since being-for-self is truly infinite, it is not other than and does not lie beyond its moment, being-for-one. Nonetheless, it does differ from the latter, and in so doing it undergoes a significant logical transformation: for, in differing from being-for-one, being-for-self proves to be a *moment* itself, namely, a moment of the very difference between itself and its moment. Yet insofar as it is a moment, it is no longer purely self-relating and *for itself*. In differing from its moment, therefore, being-for-self not only proves to be a moment, but it reduces itself to a *mere* moment, a *mere* being-for-one.

This means, however, that being-for-one now relates only to being-for-one, that is, to *itself*, and so is in turn pure being-for-self. This new being-for-self differs from the previous one, however, since it has no internal moments. This stems from the manner in which it arises. The new being-for-self arises because being-for-one, or being-a-moment, relates immediately to itself in the “other” to which it relates. In relating to *itself*, however, it ceases being one side of a difference, and so *ceases being a moment*. The self-relation that it constitutes thus has *no* moments within it, but is indeterminate and empty. Hegel calls this immediately self-relating but empty being the “one” (*Eins*). The one is thus truly infinite, self-enclosed being with nothing “momentary” about it at all. It has no internal moments and it is not a moment of any larger process or of any difference from anything else, but it is purely the one that it is.

In the course of its logical development, however, the infinite one itself comes to be a moment. It does so by entering into a twofold relation to other ones: repulsion and attraction. These two relations then in turn prove to be moments of both themselves and one another, since each presupposes itself and

the other. The utterly self-subsistent one turns out, therefore, not just to be self-subsistent after all, but, like the finite, to be a *moment*.

Note, however, that in proving to be a moment of two relations (and of the relation between those two relations) the one does not cease being a self-relating, independent *one* – and so truly infinite – and so is not reduced to mere finitude. It is *as a self-subsistent one* that it comes to be a moment and so relational. The *Logic* shows, therefore, that *all* quality – whether finite or truly infinite – is ultimately non-self-subsistent and “momentary”. All quality, in other words, consists ultimately in *not-just-being-itself*, that is, in being “sublated” (*aufgehoben*). It is particularly paradoxical that this should be true of being-for-self or the one. Being-for-self is the highest form of quality, because it is being that is most thoroughly *itself* (see 1: 252). Yet even such being, in the form of the self-relating one, proves to be a moment of relations and of relations between relations. No quality, therefore, stands alone as purely what it is, but all quality ultimately has the status of a moment.

It is noteworthy, however, that speculative logic shows quality to be a moment before it discloses what in the end it is a moment of. Indeed, such logic derives the latter by further developing the thought of quality-as-moment or quality-as-*aufgehoben*. This development will eventually lead to the thought that quality is a moment of the Idea. To see what further form of being arises first, however, we must consider in more detail what it means for the quality of being-a-one to be a moment. We know that finitude is a moment of true infinity; but what form of being contains the one, as well as repulsion and attraction, as its moments? Hegel’s answer is *quantity*.

THE ONE AS A MOMENT OF QUANTITY

On SL 144 / LS 182 Hegel describes the one (*Eins*) as a “becoming” (*Werden*). It is a becoming, or process, for two reasons. First, the one is “the *becoming of many ones*” (SL 135-6 / LS 171), that is, the movement of repulsion. Second, it is the process of relating to itself in those many ones and becoming *one* self-relating one, that is, the movement of attraction (SL 141 / LS 178-9). (One could also say that, through the course of its logical development, the one is the process of *becoming* repulsion and attraction themselves.)

Now, as the finite and bad infinite come to be the process of relating to themselves through one another, they also come to be *moments* of that process. The same is true of the one: it, too, becomes a moment of the process, or processes, that it proves to be (precisely *as a self-subsistent one*). A moment, we recall, is what is no longer just itself, that is, what has been negated or *sublated*. Accordingly, Hegel says of the one that “the process which it is, posits and contains it from all sides only as something sublated [*nur als ein Aufgehobenes*]” (SL 144 / LS 183).

This sublating of the one, or reduction of it to a moment, occurs most obviously as the one becomes the process of attraction: for in that process it is explicitly a one-in-relation-to-other-ones. Yet this reduction also occurs, prior to this, in the process of repulsion, since the latter also *relates* ones to one another and so reduces their pure “being-for-self” to “being-for-other” (even though, in another respect, it preserves the being-for-self, or independent self-identity, of the ones) (see SL 138 / LS 174-5, and 1: 273). As we have seen, these two relations, repulsion and attraction, both relate to themselves in their other, since each is presupposed by, and contained in, the other, and in so doing each in turn becomes a moment of its relating to itself. The one, in its exclusive self-subsistence, is thus thoroughly transformed into a non-self-subsistent *moment*, because it proves to be a moment of its two relations, and these relations in turn become moments of their respective relating-to-self. The sublating of the one, in other words, issues in processes of relating-to-self in which *there is nothing but moments*.

Yet the one is not only a moment of the processes it constitutes, but, together with repulsion and attraction, it also constitutes self-relating *being* or immediacy. This is because all three relate *immediately* to themselves in their other: the one goes together with itself in the many ones, and then repulsion and attraction both presuppose themselves while presupposing one another.³ Moreover, they do not just constitute three separate spheres of self-relating being, but together they form a unity: since the one is a moment of both repulsion and attraction, and the latter are moments of one another, all three form a single sphere of self-relating being or immediacy. As Hegel puts it, therefore, the process of the one, or “becoming”, that has emerged here, “in the instability [*Haltungslosigkeit*] of its moments, is the collapse, or rather the going-together-with-itself, into simple immediacy” (SL 145 / LS 183). This new immediacy is, however, no longer qualitative being.

As we noted above, after sheer immediacy (or pure being) has been lost at the start of the *Logic*, quality takes two further forms. On the one hand, it is determinate and relational, and so takes the form of a *moment*; on the other hand, it is *self-relating*. These two features initially come together in the shape of a self-relating something that is limited and finite. The finite, however, proves to be a mere moment of truly infinite being, which in turn takes the further forms of being-for-self and the immediate, exclusive one. In the one, quality as *self-relating* comes into its own and explicitly excludes finitude and being a moment. Yet even this infinitely self-relating one proves to be a moment, as it repels and attracts other ones. Indeed, through the fact that repulsion and attraction relate to themselves in one another and so become moments of their self-relation, the one is reduced to a moment of a moment, and so becomes thoroughly “momentary”. At this point, therefore, the *highest* form of quality – being-for-self in the form of a purely self-relating one⁴ – proves to be a *moment*

of the further self-relating being or immediacy that arises with the “*self-presupposing*” of repulsion and attraction (SL 143 / LS 181). Since, however, this further self-relating being, or being-for-self, contains the highest form of quality, as well as the relations produced by such quality, as its moments, *it cannot itself be a further form of quality*. It is, rather, *quantity*, in which quality is present only as negated or sublated. Such quantity is what quality itself proves to be, and so in that sense is, indeed, a further form of the latter; but it is also a new kind of being, since it is quality that is precisely *no longer qualitative*.

Two things should be noted about quantity, as it has been derived here. First, it is not anything other than the moments that constitute it, but it is the immediate self-relating *of* those moments. Quantity is not a third thing beyond the one, repulsion and attraction, but it is the self-relating being, or being-for-self, constituted by them. This does not mean that repulsion and attraction themselves now have no existence outside quantity. As *repulsion* and *attraction* they are, and remain, forms of quality – two interrelated and interdependent relations between ones. Yet, insofar as they constitute – together with the one – a single sphere of self-relating being, they constitute quantity. Quantity itself, therefore, consists simply in repulsion’s relating to itself in attraction, attraction’s relating to itself in repulsion, and the one’s relating to itself in other ones that occurs *as* repulsion and attraction relate to themselves in one another.

In this respect, quantity is a further manifestation of true infinity (rather than finitude or bad infinity). More particularly, it is a further manifestation *of the one*. The one, we recall, arises when being-for-one, or being-a moment, relates solely to itself. The one is thus the pure self-relating *of moments*, of non-self-subsistent or *sublated* being, which is why Hegel defines it, in an otherwise bewildering formulation, as “the self-relation of the sublating” (*die Beziehung-auf-sich-selbst des Aufhebens*) (SL 132 / LS 166). In the one itself, however, the self-relating of moments entails their disappearance, since they cease being mere *moments* as they form being that is purely *for itself*. Quantity is the further realization of the one, insofar as it, too, is nothing but the self-relating of moments. Yet in quantity the moments are preserved, since the one – and therefore also its relations – remains irreducible, even in being reduced to a moment. Quantity, therefore, is not simply an abstract, empty unity – a pure one – but it is internally differentiated being: being that comprises many ones and their mutual repulsion and attraction (in the form of discreteness and continuity) (see SL 154-5 / LS 194-5).

The second point is this. As we have just noted, ones remain irreducible – remain *ones* – even as moments of repulsion and attraction. Accordingly, as repulsion and attraction relate to themselves and so continue in one another – thereby constituting quantity – so also the one continues in other *ones* that lie outside it. Quantity, therefore, must itself consist in the continuing of the one, or unit, beyond itself. To put it another way, quantity must be the continuing of

the one beyond its own *limit*. The one, we recall, is from the start the limit that is *not* a simple limit. It is initially a limit within its being-for-self, and so is determinate without being bounded by another (SL 132 / LS 166). Each one is then also a limit (or has a limit) with respect to other ones, since it is itself and *not* any other. This limit holds the ones apart from one another; yet it is not an explicit, qualitative limit, since it is not the point at which the being of the one touches that of the other but it falls outside the ones as the void between them or their complete unrelatedness (SL 136-7 / LS 172-3). In continuing beyond itself, as it must do in quantity, the one is once again a limit that is not a limit. As a one, it has its own limit that makes it this one, not another one; yet every other one is equally a one, is the same *one*; the one thus continues beyond itself and *beyond its own limit*, and the latter proves not to be a limit after all.

On SL 145 / LS 183-4 Hegel ends his account of the logic of quality by pulling together the most general features of quantity that stem from the manner in which it has been derived. Quantity is the “unity” to which the “qualitative” has been raised by its logical development. This unity, Hegel maintains, is, first of all, *being* (*Sein*), or *immediacy*, that is constituted and “mediated” by the self-relating of its moments. It is not pure and simple being, therefore, but the unity that “*continues through*” (*hindurchgeht*) the moments – the “determinacies”, differences and limits – that it contains. This unity is also *determinate* being (*Dasein*), precisely because it contains “negation or determinacy as moment”. Such determinacy, however, is not determinacy in the immediate form in which it first appears in the *Logic*, namely as simple non-being, and then as reality and negation; but it is “reflected into itself”, “relating not to an other but to itself”, and so is purely self-relating determinacy or the *one*. As *being* that continues through its determinacies or moments, therefore, the unity that is quantity must continue through the many *ones* it contains. Indeed, as we have seen, it must be the continuous self-relating of the one. As the *self-relating* of the one, however, this unity is not only being and determinate being, but also *being-for-self* (*Fürsichsein*). As such, Hegel states, quantity is the unified, *continuous* being – the continuing of the one beyond itself in other ones – in which the one “is itself posited as sublated” and so is a *moment* of its own continuing to be.

It is important to note that the two thoughts expressed in this last sentence are logically inseparable: the one relates to itself, and so *continues*, in other ones beyond it, only insofar as it is a *moment* of its own self-relation. Being a moment is integral to the one’s continuity for the following reason: the one can continue *beyond* itself, only if the self beyond which it continues is but one aspect or moment of its continuing self – an aspect which, one might say, it leaves behind in going beyond it. Conversely, the one’s continuity is itself integral to its being a moment. This is because the one can be a moment, only if it is *no longer just itself*, and it is not-just-itself most thoroughly when it continues *beyond* itself and relates to itself in other ones. Something (*Etwas*) is

not-just-itself through being contaminated, right to its core, by the other (see SL 97 / LS 120-1). The one, however, is an exclusive unity and so allows in nothing else that could contaminate it. Accordingly, its “not-just-being-itself” must consist, ultimately, in extending *beyond* itself.

Being a moment, or non-self-subsistent, and being infinitely self-relating or self-subsistent, would appear to be in tension with one another; and, indeed, in the sphere of quality they are for the most part in tension (even when bound together). So being something is *not* just being determinate and relational, and being truly infinite is *not* just being a finite moment. In the case of the one, however, being a moment and being self-relating finally come to coincide. On the one hand, it is *as* a purely self-relating one that the one enters into relation to other ones and so becomes a moment of that relation. On the other hand, the one is also a moment *of* its self-relation when the latter is understood, not as the one’s own immediate identity, but as its relating to itself in the *other* ones to which it relates. Furthermore, as we saw in the previous paragraph, the one’s being a moment and its relating to itself, or continuing, in other ones are necessarily, not just contingently, connected. The one can relate to itself, and so continue, beyond itself, only in being a moment *of* that self-relation. And the one is a *moment* – and so not just itself – most thoroughly, when it continues *beyond itself*.

Note, however, that in continuing beyond itself the one does not in fact just leave itself behind, as a moment that has been superseded: for *that very moment itself* – the simple, self-relating one – is precisely what continues beyond itself. The one is thus not just a discarded moment of its self-relation, but the latter is the self-relating *of* that moment, the continuity constituted *by* that moment. Being a moment and continuing beyond oneself not only coincide, therefore, but they coincide *completely*.

“Quantity” is the name that Hegel gives to this complete coincidence of being a moment and being self-relating that is made necessary by the one (and by repulsion and attraction). Quantity thus contains the *one* as its moment and cannot be thought without it. Where there is mere determinacy, or the mere relation between something and another, or the mere relation between the finite and the infinite, there is quality, but not yet quantity: quantity consists in the continuity *of ones* (or units). Furthermore, quantity consists in the continuing of the one *beyond* and *outside* itself. That is to say, quantity is the continuing of the one beyond its limit. In quantity, therefore, the one is, or has, a limit that does not confine the one within it, or a “limit which is none” (*Grenze, die keine ist*) (SL 145 / LS 184).

QUALITY AND QUANTITY

Qualitative being, prior to the emergence of the one, consists (if we leave to one side truly infinite being) in being a finite, limited thing. The limit it has makes the thing what it is and not another thing: it gives the thing its defining quality.

If the thing changes, or goes beyond, this qualitative limit, therefore, it loses its distinctive quality and becomes something different. This is not to deny that something can preserve its identity through qualitative change (see SL 92 / LS 114). Yet if it changes in a way that alters, or takes it past, its *limit*, it ceases altogether being what it is. As Hegel puts it, a qualitative limit is so identical with the being of something “that with its alteration the something itself vanishes” (SL 145 / LS 183). When a field changes its qualitative limit, therefore, it loses the quality that makes it a field, and so “becomes a meadow, forest, and so on” (SL 153 / LS 193).

A quantitative limit differs from a qualitative limit in that it can be changed or exceeded without the thing becoming a quite different thing. A thing can go beyond its current quantitative limit and get bigger, or a colour can become more intense, without either ceasing to be what it is: “a red, whether brighter or paler, is always red; but if it altered its quality it would cease to be red, would become blue, and so on” (SL 153 / LS 193). A purely quantitative limit is thus a determinacy, to which, as Hegel puts it, a thing is “*indifferent*” – though, as we will see in the section on measure, there is also a quantitative limit to which a thing is not indifferent, because transcending it changes the thing’s defining quality, and so turns it into something new, as when increasing the temperature of water eventually turns it into steam (see SL 288 ff. / LS 370 ff.).

A quantitative limit – that is not a measure – is thus, as noted above, a “limit which is none”. Such a limit is, however, prefigured in the sphere of quality itself. The general idea of negation that is *not* just negative runs through the whole of quality. Something, for example, is negation or determinacy that is not just that but self-relating, and true infinity is finitude that is not just finite but the process of relating to itself. In the infinitely self-relating one, however, we encounter an explicit *limit* that is not just the limit that it is. The one does, indeed, have a limit, which makes it this one, *not* anything else; yet this limit is no longer a straightforward qualitative limit. This is because it does not confer on the one a quality that is clearly distinct from any other one (as a field is distinct from a wood): every one, after all, is equally a one. The one is, indeed, determinate and limited within itself, but this limit does not make it a qualitatively distinct one. The one is thus deeply contradictory. On the one hand, it is the most complete realization of qualitative being: being absolutely determinate in and for oneself. On the other hand, however, it also undermines qualitative difference, since it is utterly empty and indeterminate in itself and so exactly like every other one.

Yet the one does not do away with qualitative difference altogether, for the latter is preserved in the difference between being one and being many and, especially, between repulsion and attraction (see 1: 277, 282). Qualitative difference is decisively undermined, however, insofar as repulsion and attraction are present, and relate immediately to themselves, in one another. At that point,

repulsion is no longer clearly different from attraction, because each *continues* beyond its limit in the other. Clear qualitative difference disappears, therefore, when both sides of the difference – repulsion and attraction – prove to be the unity of the two: the relation-to-self-in-the-other. There are then no longer two quite different sides, but rather two inseparable forms of continuous, self-relating being: the relating of repulsion to itself in attraction which, equally, relates to itself in repulsion.

Yet qualitative difference also disappears for the opposite reason: not because repulsion and attraction both prove to be – together and in the same way – self-relating and continuous, but because neither is any longer just *itself*. Repulsion and attraction cease being just themselves, and so clearly different from one another, because each proves to be a moment *of* the other. Qualitative difference is thus undone by repulsion and attraction in two different ways: there is, finally, no clear difference between them, because each *continues* beyond itself in the other, and so is equally self-relating, and also because each is a *moment* of the other, and so neither is just itself. These two ways are, however, inseparable: qualitative difference comes to an end because repulsion and attraction prove to be moments of one another and *thereby* continue themselves in their other.

It should be emphasized that this *continuing-beyond-oneself-in-the-other* is a new logical structure that has not emerged before in the sphere of quality. Reality and negation are concealed in one another, but they are nonetheless explicitly different; something is itself other than its other, but being-other is also quite separate from being-something; and determination and constitution pass over into one another, but again they are distinct categories. The finite and the bad infinite come closest to repulsion and attraction, since each relates to itself through the other. As I noted in the last chapter, however, neither the finite nor the infinite relates to itself *immediately* in the other; each relates to itself through the other, only insofar as the other itself turns into, or points beyond itself to, its *opposite* (see 1: 281). Repulsion and attraction, by contrast, relate immediately to themselves in one another, so, in this respect, neither is clearly distinct from, or the opposite of, the other. This is not to deny that repulsion and attraction continue to differ as moments; yet their difference, in the end, proves not to be straightforwardly qualitative, since each is present – and so continues – in the other in a way that erodes the difference between them. It is with these relations between ones, therefore, that qualitative difference is left behind, and we enter the sphere of quantity – specifically, when together they form a single sphere of self-relating being.

Yet not only does clear qualitative *difference* disappear in quantity, but so also does pure self-relation or pure *being-for-self*. As noted above, repulsion and attraction relate to themselves in, and so are contained in, one another and so neither is a separate relation for itself, neither is simply *itself*. Their relation-to-self-in-the-other is also the self-relating or continuity of the one, and this one

is not simply itself, either. The one is pure being-for-self, but, as we have seen, it generates a multiplicity of ones outside it and continues being itself in those other ones. In its developed form, therefore, it relates to itself in being *outside itself*: it is “relation-to-self as a determinacy rather in another determinate being” (SL 152 / LS 192). This means, however, that the one – pure being-for-self – is not purely *for itself* after all, is not purely *itself*, but is just as much beyond or external to itself. Such self-externality is made necessary by the *quality* of the one itself – the fact that it excludes other ones from itself and so excludes itself from itself. Yet this quality of the one generates a sphere of self-externality – of extending *beyond* oneself – that exceeds that of quality altogether. This sphere of self-externality, or more precisely of the self-external one, is quantity.

Quantity is thus made necessary by the quality of the one (which in turn gives rise to repulsion and attraction), and so, ultimately, by quality as a whole. Yet quantity is no longer quality as such, but quality that has been negated or sublated. Quality, as we have seen, consists in being determinate – being this, *not* that – and further in being self-relating (in the form of something and then of being-for-self). These two forms or aspects of quality are subtly different, but they also have something important in common: they are both forms of what one might call “itselfness”. Whatever is determinate is a moment of its difference from another, and so is not simply free-standing; but it is also *different* from that other and so in that sense is itself. To be self-relating, on the other hand, is to be explicitly oneself and to stand apart from any other. In both cases, therefore, quality consists in being oneself, what one is.

Quantity, however, is the sphere in which there is no clear qualitative difference, determinacy or limit, because repulsion and attraction are *moments of* one another and – for that very reason – *continue* themselves in their other (and because the one also continues itself in other ones). It is also the sphere in which there is no pure self-relation or being-for-self, because neither repulsion nor attraction is just itself, and the one continues being itself only outside and beyond itself. Quantity is thus characterized above all by the absence of simple quality, “itselfness” or “thisness”. It is the sphere in which nothing is just itself.

Note that both being a moment and continuing beyond oneself are ways of not-just-being-onese. Being a moment is, as it were, being less than oneself, whereas continuing outside and beyond oneself is, as it were, being more than just oneself. Quantity, as the sphere of sublated quality, is thus the sphere in which the most perfect realization of qualitative itselfness – the one – is *never purely itself*. In quantity the one is always both outside itself *and* a moment of its being-outside-itself, and so is never just a one.

PART THREE

Quantity

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Quantity and Divisibility

For most of us it is simply a matter of fact that things have quantity. We understand them to have size, to get bigger or smaller and to be countable, but we don't ask why this should be. We ask neither why there is quantity in the world, nor why we ourselves think in quantitative terms, but we just take it for granted that it is so. Hegel, by contrast, explains why there is quantity, and why we think in terms of it, by showing it to be made necessary by the nature of quality and, ultimately, being itself. In the process he not only demonstrates that quantity is an ontological necessity, rather than something contingent, but he also discloses the intimate logical connection between quantity and quality that has been largely overlooked by previous philosophers. Joël Biard and his co-commentators on Hegel's *Logic* maintain that, from Aristotle to Kant, philosophy simply "juxtaposed the categories of quantity and quality" and relied on "a sort of pre-discursive consciousness of their heterogeneity".¹ This is particularly evident in the case of Kant. He sought to prove that the categories of quantity and quality are inseparable insofar as they are transcendental conditions of the objects of experience, but he saw no intrinsic *logical* connection between them. In his view, they are derived from different functions of judgement and so are logically quite distinct (see CPR B 95-106). Hegel, however, shows that quality itself gives rise to quantity through its inherent logic. This is not to deny that there is a difference between the two; but they are bound together logically (and ontologically) in a way that Kant could not conceive.²

Hegel's novel derivation of quantity from quality allows him to avoid what he sees as a problem in the usual mathematical definition of quantity or magnitude (*Größe*). In mathematics, he writes, magnitude is usually defined as "that which can be *increased* or *decreased*" (SL 153 / LS 193-4). To increase or decrease, however, is to make something bigger or smaller, that is, to increase or decrease its *magnitude*. Magnitude is thus defined as that aspect of something

whose magnitude can be altered. The mathematical definition proves, therefore, to be circular and “awkward” (*ungeschickt*), “for the very term is used in it that ought to be defined”, and the nature of magnitude itself is not explained.³ Hegel’s speculative logic avoids this problem by deriving the structure of quantity from purely *qualitative* categories, namely the one, repulsion and attraction. Hegel thus not only explains why there must be quantity at all, but in so doing he also provides a non-question-begging account of its structure.

PURE QUANTITY

The second section of the doctrine of being is entitled “Magnitude (quantity)”. In the first Remark Hegel then notes that the term “magnitude” (*Größe*) normally refers to some particular, determinate quantity or “quantum” (such as the magnitude, or size, of this or that thing) (SL 153 / LS 193). What has emerged at this point in the *Logic*, however, is not the idea of a particular quantity, but simply that of quantity as such, or “pure quantity”, and, strictly speaking, we do not yet know whether this will take the form of quanta. Accordingly, Hegel says, we must initially use the term “quantity”, rather than “magnitude”, to name the new subject-matter – though, as we shall see, Hegel does not adhere consistently to this principle and the term “magnitude” is reintroduced before the idea of “quantum” itself is derived (see SL 165-7 / LS 209-11).

Hegel begins his account of quantity as such, or pure quantity, by examining how attraction and repulsion are to be understood within quantity. We know that attraction and repulsion relate immediately to themselves, and so continue, in one another (and that the one [*Eins*] in turn relates to, and continues beyond, itself in all other ones). In relating to themselves in this way, Hegel explains, attraction and repulsion constitute together a single sphere of self-relating being or “immediacy” (SL 144-5 / LS 181-3).⁴ Yet such being is no longer qualitative because it is constituted by attraction and repulsion that are themselves no longer qualitatively distinct, but moments *of* one another (as well as of their very self-relation). The self-relating being or immediacy they constitute, in which they and the one – the highest manifestations of quality – are *moments*, is thus identified by Hegel as *quantity* (or rather “quantity” is the name he gives to this new logical structure that is no longer qualitative). Hegel now considers more closely the form that attraction and repulsion have when they are conceived explicitly *as* moments of quantity. This form is one in which each is built into the other explicitly *from the outset*. In the sphere of quality, attraction and repulsion are initially qualitatively distinct, since they point in different, indeed opposed, directions, but they then turn out to presuppose, and to be moments of, one another. In quantity, each is now explicitly present in the other from the start.

Hegel opens his account of quantity, in 1.2.1.A, by claiming that “quantity is sublated being-for-self” (SL 154 / LS 194). This is one of those Hegelian statements that can leave readers shaking their heads, but it is actually less obscure than it appears. Being-for-self, as we have seen, takes the form of the *one* that repels and excludes other ones. Such repulsion is integral to the one, for it is precisely by repelling other ones from itself that the one is purely for itself, purely the *one* that it is (see SL 138 / LS 175). At the same time, however, the one relates to itself *in* all the others, since each is the same empty one. Furthermore, just because each is the *same* one, they together form one single self-relating-of-the-one. This is not to deny that there are many ones, but thanks to their all being the same – to their all being *the one* – there is in fact only *one* self-relating-of-the-one going on. In repelling one another, therefore, the ones also combine to form one simple self-relation or unity in a movement that Hegel calls “attraction” (see 1: 275-6). The separate being-for-self of the ones is thus negated, or “sublated”, because “being-for-self has passed over into attraction”, or, as Hegel also puts it, “the absolute obduracy [*Sprödigkeit*] of the repelling *one* has melted away into this *unity*” (SL 154 / LS 194).⁵ In other words, being-for-self in the form of the one is sublated as a new being-for-self emerges: the “one of attraction” (though, as we saw in the last chapter [1: 290], such sublation already begins to occur in repulsion itself).

Attraction alone, however, does not constitute *quantity*. It constitutes the latter insofar as it is completely fused, and co-extensive, with repulsion, such that the latter is present in it explicitly *from the start*. Accordingly, in quantity, the unity or simple self-relation formed by attraction is generated by ones that at the same time explicitly repel and fall outside one another. It is not, therefore, just a simple unity, but it is the unity of many separate ones and so contains “plurality”, or what Hegel calls the “*outside-one-another of plurality*” (*Außereinander der Vielheit*), explicitly within itself (SL 154 / LS 195). Yet, as just noted, the many ones are not only outside, or external to, one another, but each also relates to *itself* in the others outside it: outside each one is just the *same* one once again. Each one, therefore, is in fact *external to itself* in the others that are external to it. The unity constituted by attraction thus ties together ones that are self-external, and so is, in Hegel’s phrase, the “*unity of self-externality*” (SL 154 / LS 194).

It is important to emphasize that this unity, or self-relation, is not something apart from, and does not transcend, the many ones. It is established by the one’s relating to itself *in* all the other ones, and so is constituted *by* the many ones themselves. The ones, however, are explicitly external to one another and external to themselves in one another. In quantity, therefore, the unity, or self-relation, that arises in and through attraction must *continue through* the explicit mutual externality and self-externality of the many ones. That is to say, it must take the form of *continuity*. As such, it is “the simple, self-same relation to itself

unbroken by any limit or exclusion”, but that is also co-extensive with the many *separate* ones (SL 154 / LS 194-5).

Now each one, in being external to itself in the other ones, continues being *itself* in those others. As one leads to another, and another, and so on – each being just as much a one as the others – the *one itself* continues without interruption. Strictly speaking, this is a subtly different continuity from the one highlighted in the previous paragraph. The latter is the *self-relation*, constituted by the one, that continues uninterrupted through the self-externality of the many ones, whereas we now have in mind the continuing of the *one as such* that is built into that self-externality itself. It is evident, however, that the two continuities completely coincide: for the one (*Eins*) continues to *relate to itself* in other ones, precisely because the one *itself* continues in each one.⁶

To recapitulate: the unity that arises through attraction is formed by the one’s relating to itself in all the others. In quantity, this self-relating *continues* as the one itself continues in other, explicitly external, ones; indeed, it continues *in* the very continuing of the one. Attraction is a moment of quantity, therefore, as, and only as, *continuity* (SL 154 / LS 194). As it is first conceived, attraction falls within the sphere of quality, since it is the qualitative opposite of repulsion (even though it is made necessary by the latter): it is the uniting of the many ones into *one* self-relating-of-the-one (see SL 139 / LS 176). It then proves not just to be the opposite of repulsion after all, but to presuppose the latter and, indeed, to contain it within itself. It is then conceived explicitly as a moment of *quantity*, when it is conceived explicitly from the start as the unity or continuity of external and self-external ones. Attraction comes to constitute quantity, therefore, because it proves not to be purely itself but to be a moment inseparable from repulsion.⁷ At the same time, it ceases being principally a process – the process of uniting the many ones *into* one self-relating one – and becomes a moment, with repulsion, of a new form of no-longer-qualitative *being*.

The moment of repulsion that belongs to attraction-as-continuity – and so to quantity – is named by Hegel “discreteness” (*Diskretion*). Such discreteness, Hegel writes, is what “expands self-sameness to continuity” (SL 154 / LS 195). If continuity – *per impossibile* – were pure continuity with no internal moment of repulsion, it would collapse into pure unity, pure “self-sameness”. It is prevented from collapsing in this way, however, and is expanded into a unity that continues *through* many ones, by the element of explicit separateness, repulsion or discreteness that it contains. Without discreteness, therefore, there would be no continuity.

Discreteness for its part, however, itself contains the moment of continuity and unity, because each discrete one is the *same* as all the others: they are homogeneous. So just as attraction proves to be a moment of quantity because it is not purely itself, so, too, discreteness is repulsion that is not pure repulsion (and in that sense is “sublated”). Discreteness is thus not repulsion as we first

encounter it: the simple mutual excluding of ones that are negatively related to one another, or kept apart by the void. It is the separateness of ones that do not mark themselves off against one another because they are – explicitly – *all equally the one*. It is separateness that is at the same time what Hegel calls the “constancy” (*Stetigkeit*) of the one: the uninterrupted continuity of being-a-one.⁸ (This is the *second* continuity mentioned above, the continuity of the one itself, which, however, as we noted, coincides with the self-relating of the one).

In becoming a moment of quantity, therefore, the one loses the negative “edge” – the overtly exclusive character – that belongs to the quality of being one (see 1: 258). It ceases being a pure qualitative one and becomes instead a discrete unit whose very discreteness *continues* explicitly, without interruption, beyond itself and thereby constitutes, not just a series of units, but one continuous being. As Hegel writes, “discreteness is thus, on its side, a coalescent discreteness [*zusammenfließende Diskretion*], whose ones are not connected by the void, by the negative, but by their own constancy, and do not interrupt this self-sameness in the many” (SL 154 / LS 195).⁹

Attraction, then, is a moment of quantity insofar as it is not just itself but, from the start, explicitly contains its other, repulsion, and in so doing contains *itself* as a moment of such repulsion. In other words, attraction in quantity takes the form of continuity that includes discreteness that itself includes the moment of continuity. It is the *self-relating* of the one (*Eins*) that continues through the *many* ones, each of which remains the *same* – and the same self-relating – one.

In this sense, we can say that continuity relates to itself, and continues itself, *in* discreteness. Similarly, discreteness, which itself contains the moment of continuity or “constancy”, relates to itself, and continues itself, *in* continuity, since it is an irreducible moment of the latter. Although there is a difference, therefore, between continuity and discreteness, it is not a *qualitative* difference, since each, from the start, is an explicit component of the other.¹⁰

At the end of the development of quality, qualitative difference is undermined when attraction and repulsion turn out to presuppose one another, indeed each turns out to contain, and be contained in, the other and so to relate to itself in it. Furthermore, attraction and repulsion not only relate to themselves in one another, but together they form *one* self-relating being, of which they are moments: the single unified being or “immediacy” that is *quantity* (SL 144-5 / LS 181-3).¹¹ We now see that when they are conceived explicitly *as* moments of quantity (rather than of quality), attraction and repulsion subtly alter their logical character. As moments of quality that are on the verge of, and then give rise to, quantity, they are *attraction* and *repulsion* that contain, and so continue themselves in, one another. As explicit moments of quantity, however, each is, from the outset, the explicit *unity* of the two: that is, respectively, the continuity-*of-the-discrete* and *continuous*-discreteness. Quantity, therefore, is to be

conceived specifically as “the unity of these moments of continuity and discreteness” (SL 154 / LS 195). It is thus the unity not only of *ones*, but also of the two basic quantitative *relations* between ones. This means in turn that the simple presence of many ones (which we already have in 1.1.3.B.c) is not sufficient for quantity; the latter arises only when such ones form an explicit continuity of discrete units.

Before we move on, it is important to keep in mind that Hegel conceives of quantity as the unity of continuity and discreteness, because the logic of quality, and in particular of the one, repulsion and attraction, makes this conception necessary. Hegel does not *assume* in advance that quantity comprises continuity and discreteness, and then conclude, on the basis of that assumption, that only the intimate unity of attraction and repulsion will get us to quantity. His procedure in the *Logic* is purely immanent, so the transition from quality to quantity cannot be grounded in what we have simply assumed quantity to be. It must be rooted in the fact that quality develops by itself to the point at which it is no longer purely qualitative.

Quality, we recall, consists in different forms of “itselfness”, the most complete form of which is being-for-self and, more specifically, the one. The one, however, proves not to be purely itself after all, but to stand in a twofold relation to other ones. Those relations then prove not to be purely themselves either, but to presuppose and contain one another and themselves. At that point, therefore, there is no longer any pure “itselfness” *at all*, because neither the one, nor attraction, nor repulsion, is purely itself. There is, therefore, no longer any pure quality, but the latter transforms itself into a new form of being. This new form of being, constituted by quality, but that is not just quality itself, is named by Hegel “quantity”; and, since quantity arises through the intimate interconnection of attraction and repulsion, it must consist in the unity of continuity and discreteness. Quantity combines these two determinations, therefore, not because they have traditionally been associated with quantity, but because they are what arise when quality ceases to be purely itself – “sublates” itself – and so mutates logically, of its own accord, into quantity.¹²

THE DIVISIBILITY OF QUANTITY

Hegel notes that, although it is the unity of both continuity and discreteness, quantity is initially in the explicit form of *continuity* (SL 154-5 / LS 195). This is due once again to the way in which quantity arises. As we have seen, the one, attraction and repulsion all relate immediately to themselves in their other. They do not, however, just constitute three separate spheres of self-relating being; since the one is a moment of both repulsion and attraction, and the latter are moments of one another, all three form a single sphere of self-relating being or immediacy. This new being or immediacy is quantity (see SL 145 / LS 183).

Quantity is thus, to begin with, self-relating *being*, or “self-identical immediacy” (SL 155 / LS 195), that has the one, attraction and repulsion as its moments; that is to say, it is the *unity* that is constituted by its moments.

Since, however, quantity explicitly contains discreteness, the unity that it is takes the expanded form of continuity. Quantity in its initial immediacy is, therefore, continuous being. Indeed, continuity is built into discreteness itself: as Hegel writes, “on account of the sameness of what is repelled, this distinguishing [*Diszernieren*]” – that is to say, discreteness – “is uninterrupted continuity”. It is true that, “on account of the coming-out-of-itself [of the one], this continuity, without being interrupted, is at the same time a plurality”; but each of the many ones remains the same one, so the plurality “remains just as immediately in its equality with itself”: it remains a continuous plurality (SL 155 / LS 195). Quantity is thus, at the start, the unity of continuity and discreteness in which the two do not yet have equal weight: it is *continuity* that contains discreteness that in turn contains *continuity*.

Since quantity as such is first and foremost continuous, it cannot be said, in Hegel’s view, to consist in, or be “composed” of, wholly discrete and simple parts. Nonetheless, quantity must be *divisible into* discrete units, since the moment of discreteness is explicitly contained in continuity. Quantity is thus what Hegel calls “the *real possibility* of the one”; yet, due to its continuity, there are no fundamental parts, or utterly discrete atoms of quantity, waiting to be reached (SL 155 / LS 196). Hegel points out that this remains true when – as will occur later, but is not yet the case – quantity takes the form of different *quanta*. Quanta, as we shall see, are not wholly separate parts of which quantity is “composed”, but limited units of quantity that remains continuous. Even when divided into quanta, therefore, quantity still contains the real possibility of further, or different, division; indeed, it remains infinitely divisible.¹³

Hegel goes on to note that quantity – or being more generally – is often reduced to a mere collection or “composite” of parts by “representational thought” (*Vorstellung*) (SL 155 / LS 196). Such thought recognizes that there is more to the world than simple, separate units, but it does not always conceive of this “more” as the seamless *continuity* of those units. Rather, it conceives of it frequently as a wholly “*external relation*” between them; that is, it thinks of the units as separate but as joining together externally to form *composites*. For representation, therefore, “continuity” – or being-more-than-just-discrete – “easily becomes *composition* [*Zusammensetzung*]”. This is the case, for example, in the proof of the thesis of the second antinomy in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, where simples are assumed to form composites and composition in turn is, in Kant’s words, merely “an external state” of such simples, or “a contingent relation” of substances, “apart from which, as beings persisting by themselves, they must subsist” (CPR B 462-4; see also SL 160 / LS 202). (The antithesis, by the way, also operates with the idea of “composition”, but it

argues that composite things do not have simple parts – a position that, from Hegel’s perspective, is incoherent, since “composite” means precisely “made up of the simple” [see SL 159 / LS 201].)

In marked contrast to the adversaries in Kant’s second antinomy, Spinoza is said by Hegel to defend “the concept [*Begriff*] of pure quantity against the mere representation [*Vorstellung*]” of it (SL 155 / LS 196). He does so by conceiving of quantity *qua* substance (or, rather, *qua* the attribute of extension), not as “finite, divisible, and composed of parts”, but as “infinite, unique, and indivisible”.¹⁴ Hegel fails to note that Spinoza in fact denies that quantity, properly understood, is divisible *at all*, and so in that sense does not develop a truly speculative conception of it. Yet Spinoza rejects the idea that quantity is divisible because he equates being divisible with already being divided into, and so composed of, parts; and insofar as he denies that quantity as such is a composite of wholly discrete parts, he may indeed be said to anticipate Hegel’s speculative conception of it.¹⁵

In the second remark inserted into his account of pure quantity, Hegel subjects Kant’s second antinomy to detailed examination and critique. This critique does not take the logic of quantity itself any further forward, but it helps to clarify and reinforce the idea, already derived, that quantity as such is *divisible*, rather than already divided, into units. In my view, Hegel’s critique also provides a profound and insightful reading of Kant, despite certain problems in that reading. We will thus now interrupt our account of the logic of quantity and look more closely at Hegel’s critique both of Kant’s antinomies in general and of the second in particular. Before picking up again the main thread of Hegel’s logic (in volume 2), we will also consider briefly Zeno’s paradoxes – which Hegel compares favourably in some respects with Kant’s antinomies – and Aristotle’s solution to these paradoxes – which Hegel says “merits high praise” (SL 164 / LS 208).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Excursus: Hegel, Kant and the Antinomies

HEGEL ON KANT'S ANTINOMIES

In this chapter we will examine Hegel's general interpretation of Kant's antinomies. We will also consider Kant's own general account of the antinomies, which will enable us to highlight both the merits of and problems in Hegel's interpretation. In the next chapter we will then look specifically at the second antinomy (and in volume 2, chapter 8 we will look briefly at the first).¹

We should note at the start that, though Hegel is critical of Kant's account of the antinomies, he also insists on its (and their) value and significance. "These Kantian antinomies", he writes, "will always remain an important part of the critical philosophy", since "they, above all, brought about the downfall of previous metaphysics and can be regarded as a main transition into more recent philosophy" (in particular that of Hegel himself) (SL 157 / LS 198).² How then, according to Hegel, did the antinomies help take us from pre-Kantian metaphysics to his own speculative philosophy?

As we saw earlier (1: 8), such metaphysics (exemplified most clearly by the thought of Christian Wolff) sought, in Hegel's view, to attribute predicates to objects of reason, such as the soul, the world and God, and it assumed in so doing that such predicates were mutually exclusive. It aimed to determine, therefore, whether the world is finite *or* infinite and whether the soul is simple *or* composite, and it did not consider the possibility that the object concerned could in fact be both. This metaphysics was, accordingly, a form of dogmatism because it assumed "that of *two opposed assertions* [. . .] one must be *true*, and the other *false*" (EL 69 / 98 [§ 32]).³

Through his examination of the antinomies, however, Kant deals a significant blow to such dogmatism, for he argues that in the case of the *world* no choice between two opposing assertions can be made but “each of the propositions must be affirmed with equal necessity”: the world must be understood to be finite *and* infinite, to be composed of indivisible units *and* to be infinitely divisible (EL 91 / 126 [§ 48]). Kant’s argument, in Hegel’s view, thus puts an end to the simple “either / or” of pre-Kantian metaphysics, at least in cosmology. Yet Kant also agrees with metaphysics that predicates such as “finite” and “infinite” are opposed to one another and cannot be reconciled. The claim that both have to be predicated of the world “with equal necessity” thus in fact produces a “contradiction” (*Widerspruch*): we must judge the world to be both finite and infinite, yet these two determinations exclude one another completely (EL 91 / 126 [§ 48]).

In Kant’s view (as Hegel sees it), this contradiction between assertions or judgements is not accidental, but inevitably confronts pure reason when it seeks to determine the nature of the world: “Kant’s conception of the antinomies is that they ‘are not sophistic artifices but contradictions that reason must necessarily *come up against*’ (a Kantian expression); and this is an important view” (SL 158 / LS 199).⁴ Kant’s argument also suggests, albeit only implicitly, that the predicates, or *categories*, employed by reason and understanding are contradictory themselves (see EL 91-2 / 126 [§ 48 R]). This is precisely because they are mutually exclusive, yet prove to be inseparable (since both must be asserted of the world). For Hegel, it is above all this implicit suggestion that categories are themselves contradictory – and necessarily so – that raises reason “into the higher spirit of more recent philosophy” and so takes us forward from metaphysics to truly speculative philosophy (SL 25 / LS 28).

The idea that categories are contradictory does not, however, form the immediate starting point of speculative philosophy itself: for such philosophy at the outset may not presuppose anything concrete about thought and its categories but must begin with indeterminate being. Kant’s antinomies thus do not lead directly to speculative philosophy. By suggesting that the categories are contradictory, the antinomies challenge the idea that they are simply distinct from, or *opposed* to, one another, that they are one-sided, *finite* categories. Indeed, Hegel claims, the antinomies “produce the conviction of the nullity [*Nichtigkeit*] of the categories of finitude” (SL 157 / LS 198). This does not itself require us to suspend all assumptions about the categories. Yet it helps prompt the philosopher, who is otherwise committed to free self-critical thought, to determine from scratch, without presuppositions, how the categories are to be understood. The antinomies, as Hegel conceives them, do not, therefore, themselves make presuppositionless philosophy necessary, but they contribute indirectly to the emergence of such philosophy (see 1: 37-8).

Hegel concedes that, *for Kant*, categories or “thought determinations” are not contradictory in themselves, but contradictions arise only when reason *applies* them in judgements to the “unconditioned” or “things in themselves” (or, more precisely, to the *world* considered as something “in itself”).⁵ (Like the metaphysicians he criticizes, Kant continues to think of the categories themselves as one-sided and finite.)⁶ Nonetheless, Hegel contends, Kant’s account of the antinomies *implicitly* suggests that categories are contradictory, and that they are such necessarily: the “general idea” underlying that account, Hegel writes, is that of the “*necessity of the contradiction* which belongs to the *nature* of thought determinations” (SL 35 / LS 41).⁷ Indeed, he calls this idea “the great negative step towards the true concept of reason” (SL 26 / LS 29).

This step is merely negative, for Hegel, because it negates the simple distinctions and oppositions between categories and points to their contradictory character, but does no more than this: it does not take us on to what Hegel thinks is its logical consequence, namely the insight that opposed categories actually form a *unity*. This insight is, however, attained in speculative philosophy, initially in speculative logic. Such logic begins from the indeterminate thought of being; but categories then emerge that are more or less explicitly contradictory or “antinomial”, insofar as each is both itself and its negation, and in this way the insight that for Hegel is implicit in Kant’s antinomies is confirmed. We also discover, however, that categories are not merely contradictory, but prove to be more or less explicit *unities* of opposed determinations (see EL 128-32 / 172-7 [§§ 81-2]). In the sphere of quality, for example, the infinite proves not just to be a contradictory *finite*-infinite, but to be the perfect fusion of finitude and true infinity: the truly infinite process *of* its finite moments (see SL 118 / LS 148-9).⁸ Speculative logic does not stop at contradiction and antinomy, therefore, but shows how categories resolve the very contradictions they contain (by mutating either into further versions of themselves or into different categories).

Now, in Hegel’s view, Kant also “resolves” his antinomies to his own satisfaction. He does so, however, not by watching them resolve themselves into a unity, but by declaring them to be merely “subjective” (SL 158 / LS 200).⁹ For Hegel’s Kant, the contradictions revealed by the antinomies are genuine and necessary, but the world that exhibits such contradictions is in truth not something that exists *in itself*; it is merely the world of our subjective experience, that is, “the world of *appearance*” (*die erscheinende Welt*) (EL 92 / 127 [§ 48 R]). Whatever there may be in itself is thus, for Kant, free of contradiction, and the latter belongs only to the world that is there *for us*. To Hegel, however, this “resolution” is inadequate, for it leaves the antinomies themselves “unresolved” (*unaufgelöst*). For Kantian reason, Hegel claims, the contradictions remain, even though the world they beset is subjective rather than objective (SL 158 / LS 200).¹⁰

Note that there is actually an inconsistency in the position Hegel attributes to Kant: for Hegel's Kant, contradictions arise only because opposing categories "are applied by reason to *things in themselves*" (SL 35 / LS 41), that is, to the world considered as a thing in itself; yet they remain even when the world is revealed *not* to be a thing in itself but mere appearance. (As we will see below, Hegel also gets Kant wrong at this point, since Kant himself does not consider appearances to be contradictory.) Yet Hegel fails to note the inconsistency, so it makes no difference to his assessment of Kant's "resolution" of the antinomies. The latter is inadequate, in Hegel's view, because Kant argues that "the worldly content, whose determinations are caught in such a contradiction, cannot be something *in itself*, but can only be appearance [*Erscheinung*]" (EL 91 / 126 [§ 48]), but he thereby leaves our own "subjective" reason and experience entangled in contradiction and, Hegel would add, contradictory categories. In the *Logic*, by contrast, Hegel provides what he considers to be a more profound resolution of the antinomies. He does so by showing that the categories that (in his view) underlie those antinomies are not *merely* contradictory after all, either for our reason or in being itself, but "have their truth only in their sublatedness [*Aufgehobensein*], in the unity of their concept" (SL 158 / LS 200).

The idea that Hegel's speculative logic proceeds by "resolving contradictions" is, of course, a simplification of what actually goes on, which, as we have seen in preceding chapters, is more complex and subtle. Nonetheless, it is true that being and nothing are at odds in becoming but united in *Dasein* and that the contradictions of finitude are resolved in true infinity. So Hegel's simplified description of what occurs in speculative logic is not wrong. The principal difference between Hegel and Hegel's Kant is thus, indeed, that the former resolves contradictions in categories that the latter leaves unresolved.

A further difference between them is that Hegel's Kant fails to see that all antinomies, properly understood, are actually generated *by categories*. We noted above that Hegel's Kant locates the source of contradiction in the *application* of categories to the world (regarded as a thing in itself). This in turn means that he does not understand the categories themselves to be the true source of antinomies, and so does not appreciate the real significance of what he has disclosed. For Hegel's Kant, antinomies are conflicts between metaphysical judgements in which categories are applied to an object of reason (the world), but they are not conflicts between, and do not highlight the contradictory character of, one-sided categories as such. As Hegel puts it, therefore, "Kant did not take up the antinomy in the concepts themselves, but in the already *concrete form* of cosmological determinations" (SL 158 / LS 199). In Hegel's view, by contrast, what is expressed and demonstrated by Kant's antinomies – albeit implicitly – is that "the categories on their own account [*für sich*] are what produce the contradiction" (EL 91 / 126 [§ 48 R]).¹¹ Thus, in order to study the antinomies of reason properly, we must focus

directly on the categories, without Kant's (for Hegel) extraneous cosmological baggage. In Hegel's words:

in order to have the antinomy in its purity and to deal with it in its simple concept, the thought determinations must not be taken in their application to and entanglement with the representation of the world, space, time, matter, and so on, but must rather be considered purely for themselves, without this concrete material which has no force or power here, since they alone constitute the essence and ground of the antinomies.

—SL 158 / LS 199¹²

This, of course, is what Hegel does in his science of logic. That logic can thus be regarded as Hegel's revised and purified version of Kant's important but deficient study of the antinomies of reason (just as it can also be regarded as a revised and purified version of Kant's question-begging derivation, or "metaphysical deduction", of the categories).¹³

Since Hegel's Kant fails to identify the categories as the source of the antinomies of reason, he also fails to see that there are far more than just four such antinomies. Indeed, he fails to see that "a more profound insight into the antinomial or, more truly, into the dialectical nature of reason reveals *every* concept whatever" – that is, every *pure* concept or category – "to be a unity of opposed moments to which, therefore, the form of antinomial assertions could be given" (SL 158 / LS 199). In this respect, Hegel claims, Kant lags behind ancient Greek scepticism, which "did not spare itself any effort in pointing to this contradiction or antinomy in every concept which it encountered in the sciences". Yet Kant's contribution is still the more important one for speculative philosophy – indeed, is "one of the most important and profound advances of the philosophy of modern times" (EL 92 / 126 [§ 48 R]) – because he argues not just, as the Greek sceptics do, that antinomies *can* be found (or generated) by thought contingently, but that they belong to reason *of necessity*.¹⁴ This Kantian insistence that the production of antinomies – or "dialectic" – is "*a necessary activity of reason*" (SL 35 / LS 41) is so important, in Hegel's view, because it in turn makes it necessary for post-Kantian philosophy to reconsider the way the categories are to be conceived (though, as we noted above, it does not itself make a presuppositionless study of the categories necessary). This is not to deny that Hegel's philosophy owes a debt to Greek scepticism (and to Greek dialectic in, for example, Zeno and Plato); but, in Hegel's eyes, it is indebted more profoundly to Kant's philosophy.¹⁵ For Hegel, Kant's emphasis on the necessity of the antinomies, and by implication on the necessarily contradictory character of categories, makes it essential that we revise the traditional conception of the latter; and his commitment to rational self-critique and freedom requires such revision to take nothing for granted about thought (or being) and to be radically presuppositionless.¹⁶

Having said all this, it is hard to deny that Hegel's understanding of Kant's antinomies is, from a *Kantian* point of view, idiosyncratic. By Hegel's own admission, he sets to one side what principally interests Kant about them and focuses on a claim that Kant himself does not explicitly make, namely that *categories* produce the antinomies and thereby prove to be contradictory themselves; indeed, Hegel even says that such a claim goes "against Kant's intention" (VGPW 3: 356).¹⁷ Moreover, what Hegel means by "category" does not coincide exactly with what Kant means. Kant understands a category to be a pure concept through which "the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition" is thought (CPR B 105); this is to be distinguished not only from an empirical concept, but also from other pure concepts, including concepts of reflection and transcendental ideas (see CPR B 316 ff., B 378 ff.). By contrast, Hegel uses the term "category" in a broad sense to refer to all pure concepts and does not restrict any of them to mere representations of the unity of intuition; all categories, for him, are logical structures in their own right that at the same time bring fundamental ways of being to mind (see 1: 23, 107 ff.). By implicitly suggesting that categories are themselves contradictory, Hegel's Kant thus implicitly suggests to Hegel himself that contradiction belongs to *being* as such – a suggestion that, as Hegel well knows, Kant himself would emphatically reject.¹⁸ Kantians can be forgiven, therefore, for thinking that Hegel does not provide an interpretation of *Kant's* antinomies at all, but simply reads into them what he is interested in finding there. There are, I think, good grounds for claiming that Kant should have been interested in what interests Hegel about the antinomies, since (as I argued above) Hegel's philosophy is the logical outcome of taking Kant's *own* project of rational self-criticism more seriously than Kant did (see 1: 40-4). Nonetheless, it seems clear that Hegel does not do justice to Kant's antinomies in a way that Kant himself would have recognized, and that the Kant whose antinomies Hegel finds so fruitful is, in the words of Martial Gueroult, an "hegelianised Kant".¹⁹

Yet things are in fact a little more complicated than this, for, as I will argue below, Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies is by no means wholly unjustified. Furthermore, as we shall see in the next chapter (and volume 2, chapter 8), Hegel sheds important light on Kant's actual arguments or "proofs" in the antinomies (as opposed to what Kant *should* be arguing or suggests merely *implicitly*).

In Hegel's view, Kant implicitly shows categories, such as "finite" and "infinite", to be contradictory by showing them to be bound to one another, even though they are opposed; and he shows them to be bound to one another by arguing that both must be predicated of the same world by reason. As we have seen, Hegel applauds this *implication* of Kant's arguments. At the same time, however, he dismisses Kant's method of argument itself as a "useless form" (*unnütze Form*) (SL 157 / LS 199). Kant's arguments or "proofs" are

“useless”, in Hegel’s view, because they serve no real purpose, and they serve no purpose because they simply presuppose what they are meant to prove. For Hegel – and in this respect I think he is right – Kant’s arguments in the antinomies, which purport to prove that the world is both finite and infinite, are really no more than assertions masquerading as arguments:

on closer inspection, the Kantian antinomies contain nothing more than the wholly simple categorical assertion of *each* of the two opposed moments of a determination, each on its own, *isolated* from the other. But this simple categorical, or strictly speaking assertoric, statement is thereby enclosed in a false, twisted scaffolding of argumentation that is meant to produce a semblance [*Schein*] of proof and to conceal and disguise the merely assertoric character of the statement.

—SL 158 / LS 200

The second antinomy thus consists merely in the *assertion* of the two moments of quantity – discreteness and continuity – against one another: “the one-sided assertion of discreteness yields infinite or absolute *dividedness* [*Geteiltsein*]”, whereas “the one-sided assertion of continuity, on the other hand, yields infinite *divisibility* [*Teilbarkeit*]” (SL 157 / LS 198).²⁰ The world is thus asserted to be absolutely finite in the first case, since division reaches its limit in simple discrete parts, and absolutely infinite in the second case, since division is possible without end.²¹ Hegel is well aware, by the way, that Kant actually opposes “*composition*” (*Zusammensetzung*), rather than “*continuity*”, to simplicity and discreteness in the second antinomy, but he insists that this does not itself generate an antinomy, since “the composite is made up of the simple” (SL 159 / LS 201). Yet, Hegel maintains, by asserting in the proof of the antithesis that “composition is possible only in *space*”, which for both Kant and Hegel is continuous, Kant implicitly pits continuity against simplicity in the antinomy as well (SL 162-3 / LS 205-6).²²

As we will see, Kant himself contends that the arguments in support of the thesis and antithesis in each antinomy are “sophistical” (*vernünfteln*) insofar as they rest on an illegitimate assumption (CPR B 397-8). This assumption is that appearances are things in themselves and so form a world that is independent of us (but also given to us) and that can be limited or unlimited, composed of indivisible units or endlessly divisible, and so on (see e.g. CPR B 535). Yet Kant also insists that, aside from this assumption, the “proofs of the fourfold antinomy are not semblances [*Blendwerke*] but well grounded”: they are properly formed arguments that are “without contradiction” and are supported by “valid and necessary grounds” (CPR B 449, 535).²³ Indeed, in the *Prolegomena* Kant states unequivocally that “I will vouch for the correctness of all these proofs” (P 131 / 103 [§ 52a]). Thus, on the (illegitimate) assumption

that empirical objects form an independent world “in itself”, the arguments in each antinomy succeed, in Kant’s view, in *proving* that both the thesis and the antithesis are true of that world.

In Hegel’s view, by contrast, such arguments are mere “pseudo-proofs” (*Scheinbeweise*), quite apart from the assumption that Kant claims they make. This is because they presuppose the very thesis and antithesis that they are to prove (and the categories contained therein): “what is supposed to be proved is always already contained in the presuppositions that form the starting point, and the semblance of a mediation is produced only through Kant’s prolix, apagogic procedure” (EL 93 / 129 [§ 48 A]). This can be seen, for example, in Kant’s proof of the thesis in the second antinomy. The thesis states that “every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts”; but the proof depends on the claim that “composition is only a contingent relation of substances, *apart from which*, as beings persisting by themselves, they must subsist”, which is itself just a restatement of the thesis (CPR B 462, emphasis added).²⁴ Hegel’s charge, therefore, is not (as Kant’s is) that the proofs of the thesis and antithesis rest on an unwarranted assumption about appearances, but rather that these proofs are altogether circular. This problem cannot just be blamed on the proponents of the two positions: for Kant himself sets out the proofs and, indeed, endorses them (with the qualification mentioned). The problem, as Hegel sees it, is thus, in Sally Sedgwick’s words, that “Kant’s treatment of the antinomies is question-begging”.²⁵ This strikes me, as it strikes Sedgwick, as a serious and well-founded charge, and we will consider it in more detail by examining Hegel’s discussion of the second antinomy in the next chapter. There we will look first at Kant’s own account of that antinomy and then consider Hegel’s critique of that account.

We cannot, however, begin directly with Kant’s second antinomy, since in his view, as we have noted, the proofs in all four antinomies share a crucial assumption that must first be examined. This assumption in turn presupposes a further “dialectical argument” whose truth is taken for granted (CPR B 525). To appreciate why Kant regards this argument as “dialectical”, or illusory, we need to review his broader conception of reason and its role in cognition, and this is what we shall now do.

Note, by the way, that “dialectic”, for Kant, is the “*logic of illusion*”, or the way (or study of the way) in which illusion is produced by reason.²⁶ It is not, as it is for Hegel, the process whereby finite determinations pass over immanently into their opposites and thereby disclose their *true* nature (see EL 128 / 172 [§ 81]). As we will see, there is dialectical illusion, in Kant’s sense – in the transcendental ideas – *before* the contradictions or antinomies arise that Hegel sees as prefiguring his own conception of dialectic.²⁷ Moreover, the conflict *in* each antinomy, for Kant, is itself dialectical in the sense of “illusory”, because the “world” that is its subject is merely an illusion.

KANT ON REASON AND TRANSCENDENTAL ILLUSION

At the start of the first *Critique*, Kant maintains that, for us, objects are *given* in sensuous intuition but *thought* by the understanding through concepts (CPR B 33). We discover in the course of the *Critique*, however, that this claim needs to be subtly revised: for it is not actually *objects* as such that are given; rather, certain spatio-temporal intuitions are given and these are conceived *as* objects by the understanding. What is given to us is simply what we see, hear and feel in space and time, and this is thought by means of concepts as (or as presenting) an *object*. It is thought as a particular object through empirical concepts, such as “tree”, and thought as an object at all through pure a priori categories, such as “causality” or the different categories of “quantity” (that is, through being understood to be the cause of some effect or to have a certain magnitude).²⁸ This does not mean, by the way, that intuitions are first given and *then* thought to be, or to present, objects: their being given and being thought occur together, since they cannot enter consciousness in the first place without being thought.²⁹

Categories, for Kant, are thus not just abstract concepts in general; they are the pure concepts through which what is given in intuition is conceived to be an object, rather than left as a mere collection of colours and shapes. Accordingly, they are what enable us to *experience* such things as “objects”, and so, in Kant’s words, are “the conditions of the *possibility of the objects of experience*” (CPR B 197). As such, Kant argues, categories necessarily apply to, and tell us about, such objects. If these objects were presented to us independently, it would be impossible, in Kant’s view, to understand how our a priori categories could legitimately apply to them (see e.g. CPR B xvii). In fact, however, they are not presented to us independently, so it is easy to understand how our categories apply to them: our categories “are related necessarily and *a priori* to objects of experience, since only by means of them can any object of experience be thought” – and *experienced* – “at all” (CPR B 126). Note, though, that the categories of our understanding are the conditions of, and so yield knowledge of, *only* the objects of sensuous experience, that is, *only* “appearances” in space and time. They do not yield knowledge of things as they may be in themselves (though they can be used, and are used, to *think* the latter) (see 1: 33).

Yet understanding (*Verstand*) is not the only faculty of thought identified by Kant: there is also reason (*Vernunft*). Reason’s task, however, is not to be a further source of knowledge, beyond the understanding, of the objects of experience. It is rather to bring unity – indeed, complete unity – to the knowledge of such objects acquired by the understanding. As Kant puts it, reason “never applies directly to experience or to any object, but instead applies to the understanding, in order to give unity a priori through concepts to the understanding’s manifold cognitions”, a unity that may be called “the unity of

reason" (CPR B 359). In Allison's words, "the function of reason is to unify the discrete products of the understanding (judgments) by bringing them into a coherent whole (system)".³⁰

As Kant explains in the Transcendental Analytic of the first *Critique*, the understanding is the source of a priori principles that determine the form of any possible object of experience. According to these principles, such objects must be extensive magnitudes, must have a certain degree of reality, must be causally related, and so on (see CPR B 187 ff.). The understanding, however, also subsumes these objects under empirical rules or laws that it has to discover a posteriori (see CPR A 126-8, B 692). Reason's task, Kant claims, is to bring complete order, unity and systematicity to such *empirical* laws (and other empirical judgements) of the understanding (see CPR B 362-3, 693-4). It fulfils that task by directing the understanding to subsume these rules and laws (and the objects they govern) under ever more general ones and, ultimately, under the highest and most general laws (or law). Note that the understanding alone formulates general empirical laws; reason cannot do this for it. Reason, however, directs the activity of the understanding and guides it towards the goal of completely unified cognition.³¹

Reason directs the understanding in this way by following a principle that is inherent in its own distinctive logical activity. That activity consists in "drawing inferences mediately" or forming syllogisms (CPR B 355; see also B 386).³² The understanding subsumes its objects under empirical laws of varying generality, but it does not derive further cognitions from such laws – or indeed those laws from more general laws – through syllogistic inference; only reason does that. In such inference, Kant tells us, reason takes a judgement, such as "Caius is mortal", and seeks "the universal condition" of that judgement (CPR B 364). It does so by first finding the immediate condition of the judgement – namely, the further judgement "Caius is a man" – and then subsuming that condition under the "universal rule" that serves as its condition – namely, "all men are mortal". The initial judgement is thereby itself shown to depend on that universal condition and to be derivable from it in a syllogism: *since* all men are mortal, and *since* Caius is a man, Caius is mortal. Kant admits that in one sense such syllogistic reasoning is not necessary, since "I can draw the proposition 'Caius is mortal' from experience merely through the understanding" (CPR B 378). Reason, however, seeks to comprehend not just *that* that judgement holds, but *why*, and it finds the answer by determining the proposition "in the whole domain of its condition", as just described.

Yet we can also seek the condition of the universal judgement that is the major premise of the above syllogism: we can conclude that all men are mortal because men are animals and all animals are mortal. We can then also seek the condition for that last judgement, and so on. Indeed, in Kant's view, reason contains within itself a drive to go on seeking the conditions of judgements,

rules and laws until it reaches one for which no further conditions can be found. Such a condition is the ultimate, *unconditioned* condition of the judgement or rule from which we begin. The principle inherent in reason's activity of syllogistic inference is thus the following: "to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed" (CPR B 364).³³

As this quotation indicates, reason directs the *understanding* in accordance with this principle (see also CPR B 359). This is not to say that reason requires the understanding to engage in mediated inference: the latter remains the preserve of reason alone. Yet reason requires understanding to subsume its rules and laws (and the objects they govern) under more and more general ones and not to stop before it has found the law (or object) that has no further condition of its own – the one that is the ultimate, unconditioned condition of what we encounter in nature. In so doing reason leaves the task of formulating ever more general laws (or of discovering ever more fundamental objects or forces) to the understanding;³⁴ but it points the latter towards a goal that it would never pursue on its own because (in Michael Rohlf's words) "the understanding has no concept of the unconditioned".³⁵ The concept of the unconditioned, Kant insists, is an "idea" (*Idee*) of reason alone (CPR B 378-9).

My purpose here, however, is not to investigate in detail the relation, as Kant conceives it, between reason and understanding. It is simply to indicate – briefly – why reason is governed by the principle stated above. Note that this principle, which Michelle Grier names " P_1 ", makes no claim about objects or the rules that govern them, but merely guides reason in its guiding of the understanding: it is used by reason to tell the understanding what to do, not what there is objectively.³⁶ Accordingly, it is what Kant calls a merely "logical maxim" (CPR B 364). The idea of the unconditioned, contained in that principle, is thus not as such the concept of an *object* that understanding can encounter in its experience, but it simply presents the understanding with a *task* (*Aufgabe*) to fulfil, namely that of "extending the unity of the understanding, if possible, to the unconditioned" (CPR B 380).³⁷

Kant argues, however, that reason cannot direct the understanding to seek the unconditioned without at the same time assuming that it is, indeed, *there* to be found. As Grier puts it, "the project of reason in its logical capacity operates in light of the background assumption that the unconditioned we seek must really exist".³⁸ This unconditioned is the ultimate condition of the law, or object of cognition, we wish to explain, but it is also inseparable from all the conditions that are subordinate to it and presuppose it (see CPR B 379).³⁹ Reason must assume, therefore, that a given law or object is preceded by the *complete set* of its conditions, and that this set is there waiting to be discovered by the understanding. From reason's perspective, if a law or object is given, then all its conditions must have been met, and so be "given", too; otherwise, the law or

object would not exist. The task set for the understanding by reason is thus, from the perspective of reason itself, by no means impossible, but one that can indeed be fulfilled.⁴⁰

So, in Kant's view, "if a cognition is regarded as conditioned, reason is necessitated to regard the series of conditions in an ascending line as completed and given in their totality" (CPR B 388).⁴¹ Accordingly, reason's logical maxim P_1 is inseparable from a second – "transcendental" – principle that Grier names " P_2 ": "when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given" (CPR B 364).⁴² This means in turn that reason's *idea* of the unconditioned not only presents the understanding with a task, but also is the thought of that unconditioned *as given* (and, indeed, of the totality of subordinate conditions, which is inseparable from the unconditioned, as given, too).⁴³ The idea is thus a transcendental, rather than a merely logical, idea (CPR B 383). Moreover, the unconditioned in this idea and in P_2 is assumed to be given as a *thing in itself* (or complete set of things in themselves), whether it is deemed to lie beyond appearances or to be coextensive with them (as in the case of the "world"). This is not made clear when P_2 is formally introduced by Kant (at CPR B 364); but it is implied earlier in the text, when Kant writes that reason treats "the subjective necessity of a certain connection of our concepts" as "an objective necessity, the determination of things in themselves" (CPR B 353).⁴⁴

Yet, as Grier (among others) has pointed out, P_2 is *illusory*; indeed, it is an instance of what Kant calls "transcendental illusion" (CPR B 352-3).⁴⁵ Transcendental illusion arises when subjective principles or maxims of reason have the "look" or "appearance" (*Ansehen*) of objective principles. A subjective principle is one that simply guides our thinking, whereas an objective one determines what there is objectively and so tells us, or purports to tell us, about objects that can be given to us in some way. Transcendental illusion is generated when a subjective principle itself *seems* to be objective.⁴⁶

Now P_1 is clearly a subjective principle through which reason directs the understanding to seek the unconditioned. P_1 , however, presupposes P_2 , since, for reason, we cannot seek the unconditioned without assuming that it is there to be found. P_2 thus serves as what Grier calls the "application condition" for P_1 : that without which P_1 would be ineffective.⁴⁷ Indeed, P_2 can be understood to belong to P_1 itself, since it is simply a corollary of the demand contained in the latter. (As Grier notes, " P_1 and P_2 express the very same demand of reason, viewed in different ways".)⁴⁸ P_2 is thus part of, and supports, the *subjective* maxim of reason that guides the understanding. Yet it also seems to be *objective*, because it states that the unconditioned must be given – objectively – if the conditioned is given.

P_2 merely *seems* to be objective, however, because (in Allison's words) "the absolute totality of conditions or, equivalently, the unconditioned posited by P_2 ,

can never be given as an object”.⁴⁹ There are two reasons why this is so. First, as we noted above, the unconditioned is assumed in P_2 to be a thing in itself, but, for Kant, no things in themselves can be given to us at all. This is not to deny that such things may exist (see 1: 33), but they can never be *there* before us for the understanding to find; the unconditioned, as thing in itself, can thus never be something *given*, as P_2 claims. Second, nothing is actually given to us except “appearances” as opposed to things in themselves, that is, objects of empirical perception (or intuition) and “the empirical progress from this perception to other possible perceptions” (CPR B 521). Every perception (and perceived object), however, is conditioned in some way by others and the progress (or, rather, regress) from one conditioned to another is endless.⁵⁰ Accordingly, nothing *unconditioned* can ever be an object of experience, can ever be given to us (CPR B 538) (which in turn confirms that the unconditioned could only be a thing in itself).

Taken together, these two reasons mean that P_2 , which states that the unconditioned must be given, does not tell us about anything that *can* actually be given objectively, that can actually be a given object for us. It merely seems, therefore, to be an objectively valid principle. Yet P_2 is just the corollary of P_1 . The latter principle, which is subjective, thus itself seems – but *merely* seems – to contain, and so in part to be, an objective principle. The “slide” (as Grier puts it) from P_1 to P_2 is, therefore, a clear example of the transcendental illusion that “rests on subjective principles and passes them off as objective” (CPR B 354).⁵¹

Kant stresses at numerous points in the Transcendental Dialectic that the transcendental illusion, produced by reason, is “*natural* and unavoidable” (CPR B 354).⁵² From reason’s perspective P_1 necessarily presupposes and encompasses P_2 ; yet P_2 is an illusory principle; the subjective principle, P_1 , thus necessarily generates the illusion that it is in part objective. This illusion can no more be avoided than “we can avoid it that the sea appears higher in the middle than at the shores” (or that a stick looks bent in water) (CPR B 354). What we can avoid, however, is being taken in and “deceived” (*betrogen*) by the illusion.⁵³ Reason has to assume P_2 and the latter will always *seem* to be objective: it will always *seem* to reason, therefore, that the unconditioned is a given reality. We can avoid being deceived, however, if we do not take the principle at face value, if we do not accept that the unconditioned is, indeed, something given. This in turn means two things. First, we must take the principle to be no more than a necessary, illusory *assumption*, not a necessary *truth*; second, we must regard it as an assumption that provides heuristic support for P_1 , not as an independent principle in its own right (see CPR B 691). That is to say, we must take P_2 to be a merely regulative principle that enables reason to guide understanding effectively, through P_1 , towards the unconditioned condition that it can never actually encounter in experience.⁵⁴

What has just been said of P_2 applies equally to the *idea* of the unconditioned that it contains and to the further forms that this idea takes, namely, the ideas of the soul, the world and God. In contrast to the categories of the understanding, the ideas of reason, for Kant, are not concepts that apply to, and yield knowledge of, objects that can be *given* to us: “just because they are only ideas [*nur Ideen*], they have in fact no relation to any object that could be given congruent to them [*ihnen kongruent*]” (CPR B 393; see also B 383-4). (Hegel, by the way, echoes this phrasing when presenting Kant’s point in his lectures: “for the idea no congruent [*kongruierend*] object in the world of the senses can be given” [VGPW 3: 352].) The function of the ideas, in Kant’s view, is thus not to *know objects* but merely to regulate and guide the activity of the understanding: “to direct the understanding to a certain goal” (CPR B 672). As Kant writes (in connection with the cosmological idea of the world),

the idea of reason will only prescribe a rule to the regressive synthesis in the series, a rule in accordance with which it proceeds from the conditioned, by means of all the conditions subordinated one to another, to the unconditioned, even though the latter will never be reached. For the absolutely unconditioned is not encountered in experience at all.

—CPR B 538

Yet the ideas do not lack an object altogether, for they have their own intentional objects: each is the thought *of* an object. Each idea, however, is the “problematic” concept of its object: the thought of an object that is certainly conceivable and so logically possible, but that is not really possible, since it can never be given to us in experience or any other way (even hypothetically) (CPR B 397).⁵⁵ Yet this by itself is not the whole story, for each idea is also the thought of its object *as given, as actually existing*. The idea is thus not *just* the problematic concept of its object, but one that at the same time purports to be *objective*, one that “pretends to objective reality” (CPR B 678). Accordingly, Kant writes, “I am not only warranted but even compelled to realize [*realisieren*] this idea, i.e. to posit for it an actual object” (CPR B 705).⁵⁶

Yet in truth the idea only *seems* to be objective because, as Kant repeatedly reminds us, the unconditioned can never be an actual, given object for us. There is, therefore, a profound illusion at the heart of the transcendental idea: the latter is the mere thought of an object, but it seems to put us in touch with an *actual, given* thing. Furthermore, this illusion is “indispensably necessary” in two senses. First, it is an unavoidable feature of a transcendental idea; second, it plays a necessary role in regulating the understanding – in directing the latter to unify its many rules (and the objects they govern) – by giving it a focus (albeit imaginary) in which “the lines of direction of all its rules converge at one point” (CPR B 672).⁵⁷ Kant insists, however, that we need not be deceived by this

illusion, provided we recognize that the object of the idea is, indeed, merely “imagined” (*eingebildet*) and “can be given nowhere but in our thoughts” – that it is merely “an *object in the idea*” (CPR B 509, 698).

In Kant’s view, we cannot avoid “realizing” the idea – thinking it to be the idea of an actual, given object – because the idea itself inevitably *seems* to have objective reality. Yet we can and should avoid “hypostatizing” the idea: being taken in by it and “attributing a *real, extra-mental* rather than a merely intentional existence to its object”.⁵⁸ This is certainly hard to do, for the object of an idea will always seem to be real, and so each idea will always tempt us to “stubbornly insist on an actual object corresponding to it” (CPR B 510). In Kant’s view, however, we must resist this temptation and treat the object of an idea merely “*as if it were an actual being*” (CPR B 712). Accordingly, we should treat the idea itself as a “heuristic”, “problematic” (though necessary) concept that *despite appearances* – despite the *illusion* it contains – does not put us in touch with any actual object, but simply guides the understanding towards the unconditioned condition that would give complete systematic unity to its laws and judgements. As Kant puts it, we should regard the idea (together with the illusory “reality” that it projects) as a “schema” representing for us the purely “regulative principle for the systematic unity of all cognitions of nature” (CPR B 702).⁵⁹

THE DIALECTICAL ARGUMENT PRESUPPOSED BY THE ANTINOMIES

As indicated above (1: 317–18), an idea as such encompasses both the *unconditioned* condition and the *totality* of conditions of something conditioned. Kant states this explicitly on CPR B 379:

the transcendental concept of reason is none other than that of the *totality* of *conditions* to a given conditioned thing. Now since the *unconditioned* alone makes possible the totality of conditions, and conversely the totality of conditions is always itself unconditioned, a pure concept of reason in general can be explained through the concept of the unconditioned, insofar as it contains a ground of synthesis for what is conditioned.

In the three principal ideas, however, the unconditioned and the totality of conditions are given different emphases. The idea of the soul is simply that of “the absolute (unconditioned) *unity* of the *thinking subject*” (CPR B 391). Reason is led to this idea by seeking “the totality of the synthesis of the conditions” of thought. Yet, since “the only condition accompanying all thinking is the I, in the universal proposition ‘I think’”, reason’s idea in this respect is only the idea of “this condition insofar as it is itself unconditioned”: the idea of

the “I” conceived as the “soul” (CPR A 396-8).⁶⁰ The “transcendental ideal” or idea of God, on the other hand, is the thought of a “transcendental substratum, which contains as it were the entire storehouse of material from which all possible predicates of things can be taken” (CPR B 603). The “ideal” is thus the unconditioned “being of all beings” that is at the same time the “absolute synthetic unity of *all conditions* of the possibility of things in general” (CPR B 398, emphasis added).⁶¹ The ideas of the soul and of God are, therefore, different; each, however, is the idea of a single unconditioned condition or ground. By contrast, the idea of the *world* is not that of *one* unconditioned condition. It is the idea of a totality of conditions that are spread out as a *series*. Specifically, it is the idea of “the absolute *unity* of the *series* of *conditions* of *appearance* [*Erscheinung*]” (which series, however, is itself unconditioned) (CPR B 391; see also B 434-6).

Note in particular the difference between the ideas of God and the world. The idea of God is the thought of the ultimate “*condition of all objects of thought* as such”, that is, of *any* conceivable object (CPR B 391). The idea of the world, by contrast, is the thought of the total series of conditions of *appearances*, that is, of objects in space and time, or objects of the senses. At the same time, it is the thought of such appearances as forming an unconditioned totality that exists *in itself*, independently of us. It is this idea of the world (with its derivatives) that generates the *antinomies* of pure reason – that is, necessary but mutually exclusive judgements about its presumed object – whereas the idea of God (like that of the soul) generates erroneous, but non-antinomial, arguments and judgements about its presumed object.⁶²

To be more accurate, the ideas and their illusions *alone* do not give rise directly to the paralogisms, the proofs of God’s existence and the antinomies. The latter are all erroneous arguments and judgements, and are generated only when we are *deceived* by the illusion in the ideas; that is, they arise when we mistakenly judge their objects to be actually given, rather than illusory. In the case of the antinomies we are led to this latter judgement by a specific “dialectical argument”. That argument is distinct from the “proofs” offered by Kant in support of the thesis and the antithesis in each antinomy: it is the hidden argument that is presupposed by those proofs and without which there would be no real conflict between them.

This dialectical argument, Kant tells us, proceeds as follows: “if the conditioned is given, then the whole series of all conditions for it is also given; now objects of the senses are given as conditioned; consequently, etc.” (CPR B 525). The missing conclusion, of course, is that the whole series of conditions of the *objects of the senses* is, and must be, given. Such objects, however, are subject to various conditions: limits in space and moments in time are conditioned by other limits and moments;⁶³ composite things are conditioned by their parts; and objects and events are conditioned by their causes. The

above argument implies, therefore, that each series of conditions is given in its totality. For Kant, as we have just seen, the totality of the objects of the senses, or appearances, is the *world* (see CPR B 434-5). The idea of a complete series of conditions of such objects is thus the thought of a certain aspect of that world, or what Kant calls a “cosmological idea”. Accordingly, the dialectical syllogism set out above issues in various cosmological ideas that are not taken to be merely “problematic” but that “postulate the absolute totality of these series” as *given* and *existing* (CPR B 525). More precisely, it issues in the *judgement* that such series actually exist, and, as we shall see, it is this judgement that then “put[s] reason into an unavoidable conflict with itself” and produces the antinomies.

Kant describes the above argument as “dialectical” because it incorporates certain illusions and errors and leads to an erroneous conclusion. Yet he also acknowledges that the major premise of the argument “seems so natural and evident” (CPR B 525). So where precisely are the illusions and errors in the argument to be found?

Kant begins his analysis of the argument by noting, independently, that “the following proposition is clear and undoubtedly certain: if the conditioned is given, then through it a regress in the series of all conditions for it is *given* to us as a task [*aufgegeben*]” (CPR B 526).⁶⁴ That is to say, we are required to seek the complete set of conditions for anything conditioned. It is analytically true that something conditioned points back to its condition, and reason by its nature enjoins us to take the search for conditions as far as possible. The proposition just cited, which of course is a version of P_1 , is thus a necessary proposition of reason. It differs from P_1 proper insofar as it enjoins us to regress through “all conditions”, rather than to “find the unconditioned” (CPR B 364) – though, as Kant noted earlier, “the *unconditioned* alone makes possible the totality of conditions, and conversely the totality of conditions is always itself unconditioned” (CPR B 379).

Kant then continues by introducing a second proposition, which is an expanded version of the major premise of the dialectical argument:

if the conditioned as well as its conditions are things in themselves, then when the first is given not only is the regress to the second *given as a task*, but the latter is thereby really already *given* along with it [*wirklich schon mit gegeben*]; and, because this holds for all members of the series, then the complete series of conditions, and hence the unconditioned is thereby simultaneously given.

—CPR B 526

This second – synthetic – proposition is, of course, P_2 , which, as we saw above, is necessarily presupposed by P_1 (see CPR B 364). P_2 , as we know, is an example

of transcendental *illusion*, for it seems to yield knowledge of objects or things in themselves but does not (and cannot) actually do so.⁶⁵ At this point in the *Critique*, however, Kant asserts the proposition without qualification, and so creates the impression that he takes it to be straightforwardly true of things in themselves, conceived as actually given to us. This impression is strengthened by a remark he makes about the “synthesis of the conditioned with its condition” that is contained in P_2 (CPR B 526). P_2 , as expressed here, takes this synthesis to bind together every member of a series with its prior condition – that is, “all members of the series” – and so states that if the conditioned is given, the “complete series of its conditions” is thereby also given. The synthesis itself, however, is said by Kant to be a “synthesis of the mere understanding, which represents things *as they are* [*wie sie sind*]”. Kant appears, therefore, to regard P_2 as telling us about “things as they are” as well, and so to have forgotten that it is in fact illusory.

Yet Kant has not forgotten this. His point here is not that mere understanding represents and knows actual things in themselves, but rather that it forms the *thought* of “things *as they are*”, and does so, moreover, “without paying attention to whether and how we might achieve acquaintance with them” (CPR B 526). P_2 in turn thus applies only to things as they are *thought* (by the understanding) to be in themselves, not to things as they are known to be, and actually are, in themselves; P_2 cannot apply to the latter because things themselves are not given to us and so cannot be known by us. Reason’s principle *seems* to apply to things as they actually are in themselves, because it seems to be objective and the unconditioned that it presents as objectively given could only be a thing in itself (not an object of our experience) (see CPR B 536). This illusion then tempts the understanding to regard P_2 as indeed applying to actual things, to things in themselves that are actually given. The judgement that it does so, however, would be a “misunderstanding” (*Mißverständnis*), or what Grier calls a “judgmental error”, committed by an understanding that has succumbed to the illusion projected by reason’s principle.⁶⁶

P_2 cannot apply – or, rather, may not be taken by us to apply – to things as they *are* in themselves, since, as such, they are not given to us. It applies to things as they are *thought* to be in themselves and states that the latter must be conceived as given as a “whole” or in their totality. In contrast to such things, Kant argues, *appearances* cannot legitimately be conceived as a totality, even though they are conceived like this in the illusory idea of the “world”. Appearances, as Kant insists repeatedly, are not anything in themselves, but are objects of *our* possible empirical, spatio-temporal experience.⁶⁷ As such, he points out, they are given only in sensuous perception or intuition and through the “empirical synthesis” of intuitions in accordance with the categories: intuitions are unified or synthesized *into* objects by the understanding. Furthermore, the preceding conditions of such objects are not given immediately

with the objects, but only come to be given as the understanding *regresses* in its synthesis of (actual or at least really possible) intuitions, that is, as the understanding discovers new empirical objects. These conditions are thus “not given at all if I do not achieve acquaintance with them”: they are given only in the experiencing of them (CPR B 527; see also B 542). Regressive synthesis, however, can never be completed because whatever the understanding comes upon in its regression will always have its own condition, whether that be its cause or simply some preceding state or event. Accordingly, in human experience no *completed totality* of conditions can ever be encountered or even legitimately conceived.⁶⁸

Given this insight, it is evident that P_2 – which states that, if the conditioned is given, the complete series of conditions is also given – *cannot apply to appearances, or objects of experience*. Yet in the “dialectical argument” presupposed by the antinomies, P_2 is precisely applied to appearances. The argument thus involves what Kant calls a “dialectical deception [*Betrug*]” and leads to a wholly erroneous conclusion (CPR B 528).

In this dialectical argument the *major* premise (as it must first be conceived) is simply P_2 : “if the conditioned is given, then the whole series of all conditions for it is also given”. This is a necessary complement to P_1 (which is itself a necessary “logical maxim” of reason [CPR B 364]) and so is a natural assumption for reason to make. As we have just noted, it is, in Kant’s view, an assumption about what things are *thought* to be in themselves, not what they are known actually to *be* (though it seems to be about the latter). Such things in turn are conceived, as Grier puts it, “in abstraction from the particular sensible conditions of our intuitions”, that is, in abstraction from space and time.⁶⁹ Unlike the objects of experience, therefore, these things are not understood to be given through a “synthesis” that is *successive*. Accordingly, the conditioned and its conditions, as they are thought together in P_2 , are not held to be given one after another in a “time-order” (*Zeitordnung*), but are rather “presupposed as given *simultaneously* [*zugleich*]” (CPR B 528). In the major premise of the dialectical argument – P_2 – the totality of the conditions of a conditioned thing is thought as given *all at once*.

The *minor* premise of the dialectical argument then states that “objects of the senses are given as conditioned” (CPR B 525). This statement is, of course, quite true. In the argument Kant is examining, however, it is tacitly assumed to be inseparable from another assertion that (in Kant’s view) is not true: namely, that objects of the senses, or appearances, are *things in themselves*. This latter assertion is a judgement made by the understanding, not an assumption made by reason; furthermore, Kant notes, it is a perfectly “natural” judgement for the understanding to make.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, it is mistaken, because appearances are subject to certain conditions – namely, space and time – that are merely the subjective forms of our sensibility and so do not, and cannot, belong to things

themselves (see e.g. CPR B 522). This natural but erroneous judgement, made by understanding, is identified by Kant with “transcendental realism” (in contrast to his own transcendental idealism that keeps appearances and things in themselves distinct). “The transcendental realist”, Kant writes, thus “represents outer appearances (if their reality is conceded) as things in themselves, which would exist independently of us and our sensibility” (CPR A 369).⁷¹

Now, as we have noted, appearances, as objects of experience, are given to us only through empirical synthesis, and their preceding conditions are given only through the regressive synthesis that brings them to mind. All such synthesis of appearances and their conditions is, however, indefinitely extendable, since everything we encounter is conditioned by further conditions: “with all possible perceptions, you always [*immer*] remain caught up among conditions, whether in space or in time” (CPR B 511).⁷² In addition, such synthesis is subject to the subjective condition of time and so is necessarily *successive*. This means that in the sphere of appearances no completed totality of conditions can ever be encountered or given to us all at once.

Yet by taking appearances to be things in themselves, the understanding (mistakenly) judges them to be given *independently* of the successive syntheses that we carry out (CPR B 538). It judges them not just to be given as we come upon them, but to be given in themselves, in a space and a time that belong to them, not just to us. Furthermore, judging appearances to be things in themselves allows *reason* to subsume the minor premise under the major premise of the argument and to draw the inevitable conclusion: appearances and their conditions are given as an independent totality or “world” *all at once* (not just in the successive synthesis of our perceptions).⁷³

In the major premise, reason assumes that the totality of conditions of anything conditioned must be given, and it makes that assumption about things as they are thought to be *in themselves*. In the minor premise, the understanding then rightly takes objects of the senses, or appearances in space and time, to be given as conditioned, but in so doing it mistakenly judges them to be independent *things in themselves*: it commits the error of transcendental realism. Reason argues, therefore, that those appearances must be subject to the major premise, and it concludes (or directs the understanding to judge) that, since they are given as conditioned, the totality of their conditions must also be given, all at once; as Kant puts it, reason applies “the idea of absolute totality, which is valid only as a condition of things in themselves, to appearances that exist only in representation” (CPR B 534). This is not to say that, according to this conclusion, we will be able to discover all the conditions of appearances, but they must be there to be discovered: spatio-temporal, empirical objects and their conditions must constitute a given totality. Moreover, they must constitute a totality that is not just *thought* to be given but that is actually given – a totality that *actually exists*.

This last claim, however, appears to go beyond what is warranted by the dialectical argument. We have assumed that the major premise of that argument is about things as they are thought to be in themselves, not as they are known actually to be (though it seems to be about the latter). In that premise things in themselves and their conditions are *thought* to be given as a totality. In the minor premise, appearances are then judged to be things in themselves, and so they are subsumed by reason under the major premise. The conclusion of the argument, one would think, should thus be that appearances, as things in themselves, must be *thought* to be (and must *seem* to be) given as a totality, but not that they *are* actually given in this way. Yet the conclusion must in fact be stronger than that.

In the minor premise appearances are rightly judged to be actually given as conditioned. When they are then mistakenly taken to be things in themselves, their actuality is automatically conferred on the things in themselves they are taken to be. Such things cease thereby being mere objects for thought and come to be seen as *actually given* things. Transcendental realism thus in fact commits two errors together. It confuses appearances with things in themselves, and so judges the objects of experience to be independent of us. At the same time, it identifies those independent things in themselves with the appearances that are actually *given* to us. Both of these errors are carried over by reason into the conclusion of the dialectical argument. In that conclusion, therefore, appearances, as things in themselves, must be *thought* to constitute a given totality, but they must also be judged to constitute an *actually given* totality, an actually existing world.

Note, by the way, that the dialectical argument we are considering here is not the original source of the very idea of the “world” (or the complete series of conditions of appearances). This idea first arises because reason regresses from the conditioned in appearance to the “absolute totality” of its conditions (see e.g. CPR B 434-6). What issues from the dialectical argument is the *judgement* that the idea of the world has genuine “objective reality” and denotes something that really exists. This conclusion is, however, mistaken because it rests on the error embedded in the minor premise: the error of transcendental realism.⁷⁴

This conclusion nonetheless forms the shared presupposition of both the theses and the antitheses in the four antinomies. Each thesis and antithesis, Kant insists, is supported by “valid and necessary grounds” (CPR B 449); the arguments in their favour, however, are vitiated by the fact that they presuppose the erroneous conclusion of the dialectical argument just described. In the first antinomy, for example, the world is judged – in the thesis – to be finite (that is, to have a beginning in space and time) and – in the antithesis – to be infinite (that is, to have no such beginning). Yet even though they are at odds with one another, both the thesis and antithesis take it for granted that the world is an actually given totality that must be finite or infinite. The truth, however (at

least, for Kant), is that “the world does not exist in itself *at all* (independently of the regressive series of my representations)” and so “exists neither as *an in itself infinite* whole nor as *an in itself finite* whole” (CPR B 533). Indeed, as Kant points out, the very question “how big is the world?” is misguided: “the question is no longer how big this series of conditions is in itself – whether it is finite or infinite – for it is nothing in itself; rather the question is how we are to institute the empirical regress and how far we are to continue it” (CPR B 542).

Now, as I have so far presented the dialectical argument, the major premise consists in the principle of reason, P_2 , which applies to things as they are thought to be in themselves but projects the illusion of genuine objectivity, of being about things that actually exist. Yet this premise does not involve any *error* of judgement or understanding, since the principle, P_2 , is not judged to be true of any existing things. The minor premise, by contrast, involves no illusion of reason, but combines the true statement (made by the understanding) that objects of the senses, or appearances, are actually “given as conditioned” with the erroneous judgement (again by the understanding) that these given appearances are in fact things in themselves. This error of judgement – transcendental realism – then leads reason to subsume the minor under the major premise and to conclude that appearances and their conditions are actually given as a totality. To be more accurate, it leads reason to require the understanding itself to judge – erroneously – that such a totality is a given reality. The conclusion of the dialectical argument is thus a judgement of the understanding to which the latter is led by reason’s inference.

Strictly speaking, reason does not make direct judgements or assertions of its own about things (though it does produce principles, like P_2 , that seem to be about them). Its principal task is to derive judgements of the understanding from one another via mediated inference. Kant makes this clear earlier in the *Critique*, when he writes that “reason attains to a cognition through actions of the understanding [*Verstandeshandlungen*] that constitute a series of conditions” (CPR B 387).⁷⁵ This very idea suggests, however, that when P_2 becomes the major premise of a syllogism, it might itself merge with an “action of the understanding”. The major premise of our dialectical argument might consist, therefore, not just in the principle of reason, P_2 , but also in the erroneous judgement by the understanding that this principle is true of things that are actually given, that actually exist. This suggestion is supported by a further parenthetical remark of Kant’s in his discussion of the dialectical argument. With reference to the minor premise, Kant states that it is “natural” to regard appearances as things in themselves, even though it is, for him, clearly an error. In this error he then includes taking appearances to be “objects *given* to the mere understanding, as was the case *in the major premise*” (CPR B 528, emphasis added). This strongly suggests that the major premise does not just consist in a principle about things as they are thought to be (and seem actually

to be) in themselves, but tacitly incorporates the erroneous judgement that such things are actually given to, and known by, our understanding. If this is correct, then the understanding is led into error in the major premise by the illusion of objectivity in P_2 – an illusion of reason – as well as committing an error of its own in the minor premise.

Yet whether there is error or just illusion in the major premise is not what is most important about this dialectical argument. What matters most is that an error of judgement is made in the *minor* premise and that this, combined with the major premise (conceived either way), yields the erroneous conclusion that appearances constitute an actually given totality or world. This in turn gives rise to the antinomies: two necessary but mutually exclusive judgements about that world. Kant maintains that the antinomy of pure reason presupposes the whole dialectical argument set out above, but it is clear that it rests above all on the error of transcendental realism concealed in the minor premise, that is, on the “misunderstanding” (*Mißverständnis*) of “taking, in accord with common prejudice, appearances for things in themselves” (CPR B 768).

As both Grier and Allison point out, however, Kant takes such judgemental error to be avoidable. The illusion contained in reason’s principle, P_2 , is absolutely necessary and unavoidable, but this is not true of the errors to which such illusion misleads the understanding or of those that the latter commits on its own (such as transcendental realism). In Grier’s words, “while the *illusions* of the Dialectic are inescapable, unavoidable, and the like, the judgemental *errors* made on the basis of such illusions need not be”.⁷⁶ Kant makes this point himself at several places in the *Critique*: for example on B 397, where he states that a human being “may guard himself from error [*Irrtum*], but he can never be wholly rid of the illusion [*Schein*], which ceaselessly teases and mocks him”.⁷⁷

The implication of such remarks is that we can avoid the errors in both the conclusion and the minor premise of the dialectical argument underlying the antinomies (and, indeed, that in the major premise, if there is one). This implication is confirmed by Kant’s Copernican revolution: for transcendental idealism is clearly meant to eliminate altogether the error of transcendental realism. As Grier writes, “transcendental realism is a presumption that not only can, but on Kant’s account must, be abandoned”.⁷⁸ If that error is removed, then the dialectical argument in which it features loses its force and the conclusion of that argument is dismissed, too (which in turn dissolves the antinomies that presuppose that conclusion).

Kant’s story is complicated, however, by the fact that the transcendental *illusion* he deems unavoidable encompasses not only P_2 but also the *conclusion* of the dialectical argument. When Kant first introduces the concept of such illusion, the example he gives is the proposition that “the world must have a beginning in time” (CPR B 353). This proposition in turn is derived from,

indeed is simply a variant of, the dialectical argument's conclusion: for it states that the whole series of conditions of the objects of the senses – the “world” – is given *with* (rather than without) a beginning. The conclusion of the dialectical argument thus belongs among the illusions of reason that we cannot eliminate. This is confirmed later in the first *Critique*, when Kant writes of the two opposed parties in the first antinomy that “a certain transcendental illusion has portrayed a reality to them where none is present” (CPR B 530). It is clear from the context that that illusory reality is “portrayed” (*vorgemalt*) in the assumption that both parties share, namely that all the conditions of appearances are actually given (and so must either have or not have a beginning). That assumption, however, is itself the conclusion of the dialectical argument we have been considering.

Kant's assertion that transcendental illusion is “*natural* and unavoidable” (CPR B 354) thus applies to the conclusion of that argument, as well as its major premise, P_2 . It will always *seem*, therefore, that all the conditions of appearances are actually given as a “world”. Furthermore, Kant insists that the antinomial consequences that follow from this conclusion will also always seem to be true. He is unequivocal about this: each “proposition and its opposite” in an antinomy must “carry with them not merely an artificial illusion that disappears as soon as someone has insight into it, but rather a natural and unavoidable illusion, which even if one is no longer fooled by it, still deceives [*täuscht*] though it does not defraud [*nicht betrügt*]” (CPR B 449-50). It will always *seem*, therefore, that the world either has a beginning or does not, and is either infinitely divisible or not, even when it has been shown to be an error to take either statement to be true. This in turn suggests that the dialectical argument – which leads us to conclude that the world is actually given – will itself always seem to be valid, even when it has been shown not to be.

The illusion that the world is actually given is, however, contained in the very *idea* of the world, for each idea of reason seems to be objectively “real”.⁷⁹ If we then add the thought that the world must be both finite and infinite, the world will *seem* both to have a beginning and not to have a beginning, and so on. The fact that transcendental illusion encompasses the claim that the world is given – as well as the thesis and antithesis in each antinomy – can therefore be explained by reference to the mere idea of the world. Kant is thus not necessarily committed to the view that the dialectical argument leading to that claim must also always seem to be true, even after it has been refuted.

In Kant's view, not only will the thesis and antithesis in an antinomy always seem to be true, but the same holds for the different *arguments* in support of them (which should not be confused with the dialectical argument we have been considering). Indeed, Kant extends this “seeming” to the paralogisms and the arguments for the existence of God. All of these arguments or “proofs” are

“sophistries not of human beings but of pure reason itself, and even the wisest of all human beings cannot get free of them; perhaps after much effort he may guard himself from error, but he can never be wholly rid of the illusion” (CPR B 397). According to Kant, the arguments in support of the thesis and antithesis in the antinomies are “well grounded” (CPR B 535), but they are nonetheless “sophistries” because they presuppose the erroneous judgement that concludes the dialectical argument: they assume that the world actually exists. Since, however, that conclusion will always inevitably *seem* to be valid (as we have noted), even when it has been shown not to be, they will always *seem* to be valid as well. Yet once again, this need not imply that the dialectical argument itself will always seem to be true, since the very idea of the world contains the illusion that the world exists.

Nonetheless, by calling the argument on CPR B 525 “dialectical”, Kant does in fact suggest that it, too, continues to *seem* true even when the error it contains has been exposed: even when the error in its minor premise – the error of transcendental realism – has been removed, the argument, it appears, will still seem to be valid. Yet how can this be? The major premise of the argument contains a necessary illusion, projected by reason, even if the error of asserting it to be true is avoided. It appears, however, that no such illusion attaches to transcendental realism: the judgement that appearances are things in themselves is quite independent of reason and is simply *wrong* (at least for Kant). When the error of transcendental realism is removed, therefore, the minor premise is surely removed, too, and the argument collapses altogether. How can it continue to seem to be valid?

The answer perhaps lies in a brief remark Kant makes in the chapter on “Phenomena and Noumena”, in which he states that the understanding is the source of its own illusion, independently of reason. This illusion or “deception” (*Täuschung*), which Kant says is “difficult to avoid”, has its ground in the fact that understanding and its categories are quite distinct from sensibility. The categories may be legitimately applied only to the objects of sensuous intuition, but “as far as their origin is concerned” they are “not grounded on sensibility” (CPR B 305). Consequently, they “seem [*scheinen*] to allow an application extended beyond all objects of the senses” to things in themselves; that is, they seem to warrant what Kant calls “transcendental use” over and above their empirical use, even though they do not actually do so. Such transcendental use of the categories does not consist simply in framing the thought of things in themselves – that use, despite the worries of people like Jacobi, is unproblematic – but it consists rather in claiming to *know* such things through the categories alone, and claiming that those things are themselves given to us to know.

The illusion that categories allow such “transcendental use” is inherent in understanding itself and has nothing to do with reason. Furthermore, Kant

appears to suggest that understanding succumbs to its own illusion of its own accord; that, at least, is implied by his claim that it needs to be “checked” or “reined in” (*gezügelt*) by critique if it is not to employ its categories transcendently beyond experience (CPR B 352). Kant explains that reason “commands” (*gebietet*) the understanding to transgress the limits of experience by directing it, through P_1 , to seek the unconditioned (CPR B 353).⁸⁰ Reason also misleads the understanding, through P_2 , into judging, in the conclusion of the dialectical argument, that the unconditioned, in the form of the whole series of conditions of appearances, is actually given (and, on one interpretation, into judging, in the major premise of that dialectical argument, that P_2 itself is true of things that actually exist). Yet the understanding also misleads *itself* into believing that it can know things in themselves, and it does so quite simply because its independence of sensibility makes it seem that its cognitive reach extends beyond the objects given by the latter.⁸¹

Now in taking itself to know things in themselves, the understanding also takes itself to know that some of them at least are spatio-temporal. In so doing, however, it conflates things in themselves with appearances and, conversely, deems the latter to be the former, thereby falling into the error of transcendental realism. This error can thus be regarded as not just a simple *error*, but as one into which the understanding is led by the *illusion*, inherent in it, that it can know things themselves. It is true that Kant does not say this explicitly on CPR B 305. He says that the categories of the understanding seem to apply *beyond* the objects of the senses to things themselves, but not that they seem to apply to things that are *spatio-temporal* in themselves, or that appearances and things in themselves thereby seem to be the same. Yet if we are permitted to add these last two illusions to the first, then we can explain how the dialectical argument can continue to *seem* valid, even when it is exposed as fallacious. That is to say, we can explain how that argument, like the other “sophistical” arguments of reason, creates an ineliminable illusion that “ceaselessly teases and mocks” “even the wisest of all human beings” (CPR B 397).

So let us now assume that each stage of the dialectical argument, not just the major premise, contains an unavoidable illusion. The major premise consists in P_2 , which applies to things as they are thought to be in themselves, but which *seems* to be objective and true of things that are actually given. On one interpretation, this premise also incorporates the erroneous assertion that P_2 is, indeed, true of such things. The minor premise then consists in the correct assertion that objects of the senses, or spatio-temporal appearances, are given as conditioned, together with the *error* of taking those appearances to be things in themselves. This error, however, is not a pure error, but one that arises from an illusion: the illusion that the understanding can know things in themselves, can know them to be spatio-temporal and so can know them to be one with appearances.

Since there is an error in at least the minor premise, the conclusion of the argument is erroneous, too: it is thus wrong to argue that all the conditions of appearances are actually given. Note, however, that, even when the error in the minor (and possibly the major) premise is exposed and removed, the illusions contained in both premises remain: P_2 will always *seem* to be true of things as they actually are in themselves and so they and their conditions will always *seem* to be given as a totality; equally, it will always *seem* to the understanding that appearances are things in themselves and that transcendental realism is true. It will thus always *seem* to reason (and the understanding guided by it) that appearances are given as a totality or world that is real in itself. So even when transcendental realism and the conclusion based on it are exposed as fallacious and rejected, that conclusion will always seem to be true (as will the theses and antitheses that are in turn based on it). As noted above, the very idea of the world already contains the illusion that that world is actually given; this illusion, however, is also made necessary by the dialectical argument that forever *seems* to be valid even when we know it is not.

Kant insists that transcendental illusion does not disappear just because it has been exposed *as* illusion. Philosophical critique can prevent us from being deceived by and so succumbing to such illusion, but the illusion itself will never be removed:

the transcendental dialectic will therefore content itself with uncovering the illusion in transcendental judgments, while at the same time protecting us from being deceived by it; but it can never bring it about that transcendental illusion (like logical illusion) should also even disappear and cease to be an illusion.

—CPR B 354

In Kant's view, this applies not just to P_2 , but also to the thesis and antithesis of the antinomies and their supporting proofs, and, I contend, to the dialectical argument and its conclusion. This latter contention can in turn be explained, if we assume something that Kant himself does not say explicitly: namely, that there is an ineliminable illusion in the *minor* premise (as well as the major premise) of the dialectical argument.

Kant famously maintains that "reason falls of itself and even unavoidably" into a "wholly natural antithetic" or antinomy (CPR B 433-4). He also claims, however, that the necessity of this antinomy is contingent upon certain assumptions. He states, for example, that reason gets entangled in "an unavoidable antinomy", *as long as* it "holds to" its various concepts of the world (and takes the world actually to be given) (CPR B 514). Similarly, he says that reason is brought into "unavoidable conflict with itself", *when* the dialectical argument introduces cosmological ideas that "postulate an absolute

totality of these series [of conditions]”, that is, postulate the series as actually existing (CPR B 525). Yet the assumption or judgement that the world, as the totality of appearances and their conditions, is actually given, is erroneous. So, too, is the presupposition behind this assumption, namely that appearances are things in themselves: the judgement of transcendental realism. Moreover, these errors, in Kant’s view, can be avoided. The antinomy of reason can thus itself be avoided, if we avoid the error of transcendental realism that underlies it (and so no longer judge appearances to constitute a whole world that is real and that must be both finite and infinite).

Nonetheless the antinomy will always *seem* to arise: the thesis and antithesis in each antinomy carry with them “a natural and unavoidable illusion, which even if one is no longer fooled by it, *still deceives* [*noch immer täuscht*]” (CPR B 449-50, emphasis added). As we have seen, there are two reasons why this is the case. First, reason’s *idea* of the world already makes it seem that the world to which the thesis and antithesis apply actually exists. Second, the same illusion is inevitably produced by the dialectical argument we have been considering. That argument always *seems* to be true because its major and minor premises, and therefore also its conclusion, contain necessary and unavoidable illusions.

An antinomy proper presupposes more than the illusion contained in the idea of the world: it presupposes the erroneous *judgement* that the world is actually given – a judgement supplied by the dialectical argument. Once the errors in the argument and antinomy have been exposed, however, that argument and antinomy do not just disappear altogether. On the contrary, the argument will always *seem* to be valid and the antinomy will always *seem* to be generated by reason. These are illusions that we can never shake off.

KANT ON THE ANTINOMIES IN GENERAL

Let us now look more closely at how precisely the antinomy or contradiction in reason is generated. First, as we have seen, reason concludes – or, more precisely, leads the understanding to judge – that the totality of conditions of appearance, that is, the *world*, is given as a reality in itself.⁸² Second, reason discerns an ambiguity in the very idea of such a totality. So what exactly is this ambiguity?

We saw above (1: 321-2) that the ideas of the soul and God differ significantly from that of the world. Each of the former is the idea of a single unconditioned condition: the unconditioned condition of thought as such in the case of the soul, and of all possible objects of thought, or of things as such, in the case of God (see CPR B 379, 391). God, or the transcendental ideal, contains the totality of conditions of things, insofar as he, or it, encompasses “the entire storehouse of material from which all possible predicates of things can be taken”. Nonetheless, God is, or rather is assumed to be, the single “*being of all beings*” that grounds all things (CPR B 603, 606-7). The idea of the world, by

contrast, is not that of a single unconditioned condition, but that of an explicit totality of conditions conceived as a *series*. More precisely, it is the thought of the complete series of conditions of *appearances*.

Kant noted earlier that a “totality of conditions is always itself unconditioned” (CPR B 379). Now, however, he points out that the complete *series* of conditions of appearances can in fact be conceived as unconditioned, or as entailing the unconditioned, in *two* distinct ways. This is an ambiguity inherent in the idea of the world, but absent from the ideas of the soul and God. On the one hand, Kant contends, that series as a whole can itself be considered to be unconditioned, “because outside it there are no more conditions regarding which it could be conditioned”. On the other hand, however, the series can be understood to have the unconditioned as its first member (for example, as the first part or the cause of the series) (CPR B 445 and n.). In the first case, in which there is no unconditioned first member, the series will be infinite and “without limits” (*ohne Grenzen*); accordingly, the understanding, guided by reason, will never be able to complete its regress through the conditions, even though the series itself is given, or taken to be given, as a whole. In the second case, by contrast, the series will have an endpoint or limit and so be finite. That limit will be the limit of space and time, or the point at which division ends, or the unconditioned (free) cause of events, depending on the antinomy concerned.

Kant goes on to argue that the complete series of conditions of appearances not only can but *must* be understood in these two opposing ways. When the thought of this necessity is then combined with the assumption that the complete series actually exists, the *antinomies* are generated. This is because thought must now attribute *two* mutually exclusive features to *one* reality, but that reality, as such, must be determinate and so have one *or* the other of them (but not both). Note that, for Kant, a genuine antinomy or contradiction is not produced by the mere thought that the world is ambiguous in the way we have described. It arises only when we take that ambiguous world to be a *reality* that by its nature must be unambiguous. Antinomies arise, therefore, only because we combine conflicting judgements about the “world” with the erroneous conclusion of the dialectical argument, which is itself based on the error of transcendental realism. As Kant puts it, “if one regards the two propositions, ‘The world is infinite in magnitude’, ‘The world is finite in magnitude’, as contradictory opposites, then one assumes that the world (the whole series of appearances) is a thing in itself” (CPR B 532).⁸³

Since the erroneous judgement that appearances are things in themselves – transcendental realism – is, in Kant’s view, quite “natural”, the antinomy to which that judgement leads is itself “a wholly natural antithetic” (CPR B 433, 528). The very fact that an antinomy or contradiction arises, however, shows that the judgement on which it rests is, indeed, erroneous: the antinomy “uncovers a falsehood lying in this presupposition” of transcendental realism

(CPR B 535). This in turn, Kant maintains, provides an indirect proof of transcendental *idealism* – the thesis that “everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e. mere representations”, not things existing independently in themselves (CPR B 518-19). Kant’s direct proof of such idealism is presented in the first part of the *Critique*, the Transcendental Aesthetic, and it is against the background of this proof that he initially rejects transcendental realism as an error: for the latter falsely turns appearances or “*mere representations* into things in themselves”. The fact that transcendental realism generates antinomies, however, confirms that it is an error, and so indirectly confirms the truth of transcendental idealism.

For Kant, reality as it is judged, or merely thought, to be *in itself* cannot be contradictory or antinomial, but must be unambiguously itself; indeed, “no predicate pertains to a thing that contradicts it”, whether the thing is a thing in itself or an appearance (CPR B 190; see also B 599). Yet, when the *world* – the complete series of conditions of empirical objects – is judged to be something real and actual in itself, it proves precisely to be contradictory. Since the arguments proving it to be so are sound (at least on the assumption that such a world exists) (see 1: 313-14), the conclusion we must draw is that the world *cannot* be anything real in itself after all. It must, rather, be an “idea” that merely *seems* to have a real existence of its own. The fundamental forms of that world, namely space and time, cannot have a real existence of their own, either, but must be merely subjective: the forms of our human sensibility. In this way, transcendental idealism is proven indirectly by the antinomy generated by transcendental realism (see CPR B 534-5).⁸⁴

Kant, however, does not justify the claim that reality in itself cannot contain a contradiction; he takes it over, uncritically, from traditional formal logic and metaphysics. (It is, of course, immediately derived from the “principle of contradiction”, which is regarded by Kant as the “general though merely negative criterion of all truth” [CPR B 190].) For Kant, it is simply obvious that reality cannot be contradictory; where contradiction is found, therefore, *there can be no reality*. This, I take it, is why Hegel accuses Kant of showing too great a “tenderness” towards worldly things (see EL 92 / 126 [§ 48 R]). In Hegel’s view, Kant deserves (qualified) credit for maintaining that reason generates antinomies, but he deserves censure for insisting, without clear justification, that reality as it is thought to be, and as it is judged actually to be, in itself must be free of all contradiction.

As we have seen, there is a necessary tension, for Kant, in the very idea of a complete series of conditions of appearances, since it can, and must, be conceived both as unconditioned itself (and so unlimited and infinite) *and* as containing an unconditioned first member (and so limited and finite). A strict antinomy or contradiction arises, however, only when that complete series is

taken to be something *real* and *actual* in itself, that is, when we commit the error of transcendental realism: for only in that case are we required to attribute two mutually exclusive characteristics to a reality that must be either one *or* the other. If, therefore, we abandon the idea that this complete series constitutes something real in itself, in favour of transcendental idealism, then the antinomies of pure reason are immediately “removed” (*gehoben*) (CPR B 534): if the reality that proves contradictory is eliminated, then the contradiction it produces itself disappears. Accordingly, for the critical or transcendental idealist, there is “no real *contradiction of reason* with itself”, because there is no determinate totality of appearances, or “world in itself”, about which two mutually exclusive judgements must be made: such a world is a mere “mirage” (*Blendwerk*) (CPR B 451, 768). The thesis and antithesis of each antinomy remain opposed to one another, but they are not actually about anything and so produce no contradiction.⁸⁵

It is important to emphasize here that, in Kant’s view, not every pair of conflicting assertions about a thing or things produces a contradiction. If, for example, we assert that every body smells good and also that every body smells bad, there is not necessarily a contradiction, since both propositions could be false: there could, after all, be bodies that do not smell at all (CPR B 531).⁸⁶ A “real” (*eigentlich*) contradiction arises in Kant’s sense, only when two assertions are made together, one of which must be true and the other false. So if we assert both that every body smells good *and* that not every body smells good (partly because some do not smell at all), we have a real contradiction, because one assertion must be true but thereby excludes the other.

Similarly, conflicting claims about the world as a whole produce a contradiction, when both prove to be necessary but one must be true and the other false.⁸⁷ Take, for example, the thesis and antithesis of the first antinomy (without their specific reference to space and time). The thesis states that the world is finite in magnitude, whereas the antithesis states that it is infinite. They produce a contradiction, however, only under the condition that “the world (the whole series of appearances) is a thing in itself” – an *actually existing* thing in itself – and so must be “determinate with respect to its magnitude” (*ihrer Größe nach bestimmt*): for this condition requires that it have a magnitude that is either finite *or* infinite (but not both together) (CPR B 532-3). If, therefore, we remove this condition by denying that the world exists as a thing in itself, the contradiction automatically disappears. It does so, because the thesis and antithesis both prove to be false: the world is neither finite nor infinite in itself, since there is no world “in itself” at all. The conflict in each antinomy is thus *in truth* not a contradiction but a “dialectical” conflict – one that merely *seems* to be a contradiction – because the world that is its subject is itself an illusion. As Kant writes, it is simply “a conflict of an illusion” (or “due to” an illusion) (*ein Widerstreit eines Scheins*) (CPR B 534).

Yet things are in fact more complicated than Kant recognizes: for the conflict that is generated by the illusory world cannot just *seem* to be a contradiction. A contradiction is initially produced because the “world” is necessarily ambiguous but is also judged to be something real in itself and therefore unambiguous. This contradiction, we are told, is then “removed” when the world is shown not to be real in itself after all, but to be merely illusory. The world, however, retains the same characteristics when it is reduced to mere illusion, as it had when it was judged to be real: it must still be understood to be both finite *and* infinite, and yet, as *the* world that is merely illusory, it must still be understood to have a determinate character that is unambiguously finite *or* infinite. This illusory world must, therefore, still give rise to an actual contradiction. There is no contradiction in the world in itself, since there is no such world and the thesis and antithesis of an antinomy are both false insofar as they are taken to apply to that world. Yet there is still a contradiction in the world there seems to be, since the thesis and antithesis still apply necessarily to that world, but the latter cannot be characterized by both of them. When the world is exposed as an illusion, therefore, the conflict between the thesis and antithesis does not now just *seem* to be a contradiction (and so prove to be dialectical); it remains a *genuine* contradiction besetting the world there merely *seems* to be. Kant does not make this point explicit himself – indeed, he insists that “the conflict of reason with itself” can be “brought entirely to an end” (*völlig geendigt*) (CPR B 544) – but the point is implicit in what he says.

The judgements that the world has a beginning in time and does not have such a beginning thus have an ambiguous status. On the one hand, insofar as the world to which they apply is not something real in itself, those judgements merely *seem* to be true: they are illusory judgements. This in turn means, as I suggested above, that the transcendental illusion that Kant declares to be unavoidable includes not only the ideas and the principle Grier calls “ P_2 ”,⁸⁸ but also the theses and antitheses of the four antinomies: it includes “e.g. the illusion in the proposition: ‘the world must have a beginning in time’” (CPR B 353). On the other hand, however, such judgements do not merely *seem* to be true of the world that merely *seems* to be real, but they *are* indeed true of it. The world as a whole is not real in itself but merely seems to be, but it remains no less true that it must be understood to be both finite *and* infinite, even though it must also be determinate and so be either finite *or* infinite.

Kant’s claim that there is “no real *contradiction of reason* with itself” (CPR B 768) thus needs to be qualified. There is no actual contradiction, since no complete world to which mutually exclusive predicates necessarily apply is actually given. Yet there *is* still a “real contradiction of reason”, since such mutually exclusive predicates continue to apply to the determinate world that seems to be given. This contradiction is no mere illusion, but is a necessary and

irreducible feature of the world that seems, and must seem, to exist: it is the “conflict of an illusion” that remains a *contradiction* (CPR B 534). Kantian reason – reason enlightened by transcendental idealism – does not confront a contradictory reality “in itself”, but it will always face the contradictions generated by the illusion of the “world” that it necessarily projects, that is, generated by its own “subjective” product. In this sense, Hegel is right to claim that Kant’s solution to the antinomies “make[s] the so-called conflict [*Widerstreit*] into something *subjective*, in which of course it still remains the same illusion, that is, as unresolved” – as *contradictory* – “as before” (SL 158 / LS 200).

It has to be admitted, however, that in these lines Hegel does not himself have in mind the point I have just been making. He is not claiming that, even though Kant denies that there is any contradictory “world”, contradiction continues to belong to the “world” there *seems* to be, to transcendental illusion (*Schein*). His claim is rather that Kant shifts contradiction from things in themselves to the (in Hegel’s view) “subjective” realm of *appearance* (*Erscheinung*). It is for this reason that Hegel thinks Kant does not ultimately resolve his antinomies: for Hegel’s Kant, contradiction remains in the world of our empirical experience, the world as it is *for us*.

That this is Hegel’s view is confirmed by his statements in the *Encyclopaedia* that, for Kant, “the worldly content, whose determinations are caught in such a contradiction, cannot be something *in itself*, but can only be appearance [*Erscheinung*]”, and that “probably no-one will object to the claim that the world of *appearance* [*die erscheinende Welt*] shows contradictions to the spirit that observes it” (EL 91-2 / 126-7 [§ 48 and R]). The interpretation of Kant expressed in these lines is, however, clearly mistaken: for, in Kant’s view, *there is no contradiction in mere appearances*. The illusion projected by reason’s idea of the world may well continue to produce contradictions (even if Kant does not say as much himself); but there is no contradiction in things as they actually appear to us, in the things we experience.

For Kant, a contradiction arises when the totality of conditions of appearance is assumed to be something real in itself, because that one totality must be understood (for example) both to have and not to have a limit in space and time. Kant then dissolves this contradiction by rejecting the assumption on which it rests: in his view, appearances do not constitute a reality or world “in itself” and so are neither infinite nor finite “in themselves”; there is thus no contradiction in them (see CPR B 533). One might still worry, however, that, even if they have no existence in themselves, appearances form a given whole *for us* that must be both infinite and finite. If that were the case, then the contradiction attached to reason would not be removed but would simply be relocated from the world “in itself” (which has now been exposed as an illusion) to the world of our appearances (which is empirically real), and Hegel would be right.

Kant insists, however, that appearances (and their conditions) not only do not constitute a whole reality or world *in itself* but also do not constitute a whole world or totality *for us*. Appearances (and their conditions) are not given as a totality *at all*, because (as we noted above [1: 324-5]) they are given only in the “regressive series of my representations” and that series can never be completed (CPR B 527, 533). As I regress from what is actually given to me to other objects of perception, I regress from one conditioned thing to another, but I never reach a point at which no further regression is possible and the whole can thus be said to be given. Accordingly, the series of appearances “is never wholly given, and the world is thus not an unconditioned whole, and thus does not exist as such a whole, either with infinite or with finite magnitude” (CPR B 533). There can be no contradiction or “antinomy” in appearances, therefore, because they do not constitute a totality to which mutually exclusive predicates must, or could even, be applied.

Hegel thus misunderstands Kant when he claims that Kant just shifts contradiction from the realm of things in themselves into the realm of appearances and thereby leaves such contradiction “unresolved”. For Kant, there is no fundamental contradiction in the realm of appearance because that realm does not, and cannot, constitute a given totality to which conflicting predicates must apply. Nonetheless, as I have suggested, there is truth in Hegel’s claim that Kant leaves the contradiction set out in the antinomies unresolved: for that contradiction remains an ineliminable feature of the worldly totality there merely *seems* to be.

HEGEL ON KANT’S ANTINOMIES ONCE AGAIN

From Hegel’s perspective, Kant also falls short insofar as he does not provide the resolution of the antinomies that *Hegel* thinks is required: Kant fails to focus on the categories that (in Hegel’s view) give rise to the antinomies when they are understood in a one-sided manner, and he fails to think such categories in their true, “speculative”, unity with one another. As we have noted, what interests Hegel about Kant’s antinomies is not principally Kant’s own story about the ideas, transcendental illusion and transcendental realism, but rather what they suggest about the categories of thought, and about the categories in Hegel’s sense rather than Kant’s.

In Kant’s own view, the antinomies are related to categories, since they are generated by combining the *idea* of the world with transcendental realism and all three principal ideas of reason are simply “categories extended to the unconditioned” (CPR B 436). As we saw above (1: 316-17), ideas as such are made necessary by the demand for the unconditioned that is inherent in reason’s activity of syllogizing. More is required, however, than I have explained so far, to generate the specific ideas of the soul, the world and God. These ideas are

generated, Kant claims, by “applying” different forms of syllogism, and the “unconditioned” they presuppose, to the “synthetic unity of intuitions under the authority of the categories” (CPR B 378). More precisely, reason produces these different ideas by starting from the form of a categorical, hypothetical or disjunctive syllogism, in which one of the logical forms of “relation” (*Verhältnis*) is expressed, and arguing back, through an ascending series of “prosyllogisms”, to the point at which the “synthetic unity” thought in the corresponding *category* of relation is regarded as something unconditioned (and / or as encompassing a totality of conditions).⁸⁹ The category of substance, for example, is the thought of “something that can exist only as subject and never as mere predicate”, so this is extended to the idea of the unconditioned subject. This unconditioned subject is then identified with the thinking subject (or “I”) to produce the specific idea of the “soul”.⁹⁰ The category of causality, on the other hand, is based on the thought of the “dependence” of one thing on another (or the relation of ground and consequent), so this is extended to the idea of the unconditioned total series of such dependencies. This unconditioned totality is then identified with the series of conditions of objects in space and time (that is, of “appearances”) to produce the idea of the “world”.⁹¹

In Hegel’s view, however, Kant’s antinomies are just as intimately connected to what he (Hegel) considers to be the *categories* of infinity and finitude, and they implicitly suggest that these categories themselves are both opposed to and inseparable from one another and in that sense contradictory (see VGPW 3: 356). Indeed, for Hegel, Kant’s antinomies are in truth generated *by* these and other categories (see EL 91 / 126 [§ 48 R]).⁹² The proper consideration of the antinomies – which Kant fails to carry out – should thus focus on such categories “purely for themselves” (*rein für sich*) and show how they resolve their own contradictions logically and thereby develop into their unity (SL 158 / LS 199–200).

Hegel’s interpretation of Kant’s antinomies clearly disregards many of Kant’s own explicit concerns. In my view, however, it is not simply unjustified. The connection Hegel draws between Kant’s antinomies and certain (Hegelian) categories finds its justification in Kant’s claim that the antinomies are generated (on the assumption of transcendental realism) by the two ways in which the totality of conditions of appearance can be understood to be unconditioned. As I noted above, that totality can be understood to be unconditioned as a whole and to have no unconditioned first member, in which case it is an *infinite* totality (in what Hegel would consider a “bad” or “tedious” sense [see 1: 240]); but the totality can also be understood to have an unconditioned first member and so to be limited and *finite*. Kant makes clear that this distinction, indeed opposition, between an infinite and finite series underlies all four antinomies (see CPR B 445–6). Furthermore, each antinomy purports to show that the world in itself must be *both* infinite and finite, even though the two are mutually exclusive.

Thus, although Hegel interprets Kant's antinomies "against Kant's intention" (VGPW 3: 356), his claim that they are generated ultimately by *categories* is at least partly justified by Kant's own procedure: for (assuming transcendental realism) Kant's antinomies arise because "infinity" and "finitude" prove to be both opposed and inseparable at the same time. It is true that for Kant (in Hegel's words) "reason *only* falls into contradiction through *the application of the categories*" to the "world" (EL 92 / 127 [§ 48 R]). Yet it is the fact that categories such as infinity and finitude – or continuity and discreteness – are themselves conceived by Kant as strictly *opposed* to one another that actually generates the contradiction when both have to be "applied" to the same world. In this sense, Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies is defensible.⁹³

Hegel is also justified in claiming that Kant does not properly resolve the contradiction that he (Hegel) sees in Kant's antinomies. Hegel thinks that the contradictions within and between categories, such as infinity and finitude, are resolved – or, rather, resolve themselves – in the course of speculative logic. This occurs as such categories prove to be moments of a unity (SL 158 / LS 200). No aspect of Kant's resolution of the antinomies, however, yields this conclusion, so none can satisfy Hegel. Kant resolves the antinomies to his own satisfaction by rejecting transcendental realism and so denying that appearances and their conditions form a reality in itself that can be either infinite or finite: there is no "real contradiction" between the thesis and antithesis of the antinomies because there is no one reality to which both must apply (CPR B 768). From Hegel's perspective, however, Kant fails thereby to resolve the contradiction between *categories* (such as infinity and finitude) in a properly speculative manner.

This remains true even though Hegel is wrong to claim that Kant simply moves contradiction from the sphere of things in themselves to that of appearance. Viewed from a modified "Hegelian" perspective (rather than Hegel's own), Kant still fails to provide the resolution that Hegel seeks. He fails in two distinct ways.

First, as we have seen, Kant rejects the assumption that the totality of conditions of appearance constitutes a reality in itself, but he accepts that it *seems* to do so. Furthermore, as I argued above, that seeming reality must continue to be contradictory in Kant's sense, even though Kant himself does not explicitly recognize this. Since the world there merely seems to be retains the same character as the world that is erroneously judged to exist, it must still be, as *one* world, either finite *or* infinite, but it must also still be judged to be *both*. This in turn means that the opposed categories of finitude and infinity still both apply to Kant's illusory "world", and so are inseparable in their opposition, and so are contradictory in Hegel's sense. Kant, however, does not show how these contradictory categories can be reconciled and thought together *as one*, either in relation to that illusory world or (as in Hegel's *Logic*) in themselves. Hegel's

assertion that Kant turns the conflict “into something *subjective*”, but otherwise leaves it “unresolved”, is thus justified, even though – *pace* Hegel – the unresolved conflict or contradiction attaches not to the realm of appearance (*Erscheinung*) but to the illusion (*Schein*) projected by reason (see SL 158 / LS 200).

Kant’s second failure is different. As just noted, no contradictions, or antinomies, are to be found in the sphere of appearance, as Kant understands it (since the latter is not a given totality that must be, and yet cannot be, both infinite and finite). This conception of appearance as a contradiction-free zone does not, however, *resolve* the contradiction between the categories of infinity and finitude that Hegel finds expressed in Kant’s antinomies. It just *removes* the contradiction by denying that the categories are opposed-but-inseparable (since, in the sphere of appearances, they do not both apply to the same totality). Infinity and finitude are thereby simply left distinct from one another within appearance: finite things are, indeed, infinitely divisible, but they are thus “finite” and “infinite” in quite different respects. Now, for Kant, of course, finding a way to remove a contradiction is a mark of philosophical success; for Hegel, however, it is to fail to take seriously the insight implicitly contained in the antinomies. To take the latter seriously, in Hegel’s view, is not to do away with the contradictions within and between categories, but to think those contradictions through to their logical conclusion and speculative resolution. Kant fails to do this because he does not see the need for a purely logical study of the categories in Hegel’s sense (see CPR B 108), but also because, for all his strengths, he is ultimately a philosopher of the *understanding*: in Kant’s view, the point of philosophy is not to go along with, and think through, contradiction but above all to keep thought and reality *free* of it.

I have suggested that Hegel’s general interpretation and critique of Kant’s treatment of the antinomies are justified by certain key aspects of Kant’s procedure in the first *Critique*. Yet that interpretation and critique still do not look genuinely *immanent*, despite Hegel’s stated commitment to entering immanently into “the strength [*Kraft*] of the opponent” (SL 512 / LB 10).⁹⁴ First, Hegel focuses, not on what explicitly concerns Kant in the antinomies, but on what he takes to be implicit in Kant’s account of them: namely that categories themselves generate the antinomies. Second, Hegel takes Kant to task for failing to do what Kant had no intention of doing, namely consider the categories and their intrinsic antinomies “purely for themselves”, as Hegel himself does in his speculative logic.

In another sense, however, Hegel’s critique of Kant on the basis of his speculative logic is immanent after all. This is because that very logic is made necessary by Kant’s own demand that thought be *self-critical* and not take the dogmatic assumptions of reason for granted (see 1: 40-1). Hegel certainly does not do justice to Kant’s account of the antinomies in the way that Kantians may expect. Nonetheless, he offers a critique of Kant’s account (as well as of his

transcendental idealism) that is ultimately driven by Kant's own philosophical imperatives: to promote criticism, anti-dogmatism and freedom. Hegel interprets Kant's antinomies as *imperfect* anticipations of his own insight into the immanent dialectic within thought through which contradictions in and between categories arise and are then resolved. From Hegel's point of view, however, (as Gueroult puts it) "pressing the *Kantian* system is enough to let Hegelian dialectic emerge from it as if by itself".⁹⁵

Excursus: Hegel and Kant's Second Antinomy

KANT'S SECOND ANTINOMY: THE THESIS, ITS PROOF AND HEGEL'S CRITIQUE

Having considered Hegel's account of Kant's antinomies in general, we turn now to consider the second antinomy in particular, which is a dispute over "whether there is anything simple in the world or everything has to be divided infinitely" (CPR B 509). As in all four antinomies, Kant presents a thesis and a corresponding antithesis, and also provides supporting "proofs" of each in turn. The proof is in each case "apagogic"; that is to say, it does not argue directly for the thesis or antithesis, but seeks to prove its case by assuming the opposite and then refuting it.¹ As noted in the last chapter (1: 313-14), Kant takes these proofs seriously. He does not regard each as a mere "lawyer's proof" (*Advokatenbeweis*), but he holds them to be "valid and necessary" (CPR B 449, 458) – except, of course, for the illegitimate assumption they make that appearances are things in themselves and so constitute a given totality or "world".

The thesis of the second antinomy is this: "every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts, and nothing exists anywhere except the simple or what is composed of simples" (CPR B 462). The "apagogic" proof of this thesis proceeds as follows:

1. Assume first that composite substances do *not* consist of simple parts (and that all there is, is what is composite).
2. If we were then to *remove* all composition "in thought", there would clearly be nothing left. All composite parts would disappear with

composition, and we have assumed that there is nothing simple; therefore, “nothing at all would be left over”.

3. This in turn means that “no *substance* [would] have been given” in the first place² (since substance as such cannot be removed) (emphasis added).
4. The idea that no substance was ever given is, however, “non-sensical” and “unacceptable”, since the assumption from which we began is precisely that there are composite *substances*. (The terms in quotation marks are Grier’s, since Kant himself takes the point to be so obvious that it does not even merit being spelt out.)³
5. It is impossible, therefore, for us to be left with “nothing at all” (since we began with *substances*, which can’t be eliminated). Accordingly, there can only be two alternatives (both of which leave us with something rather than nothing):
 - 5a. composition *cannot* be removed in thought after all, but is irreducible; or
 - 5b. composition *can* be removed, but “after its removal something must be left over that subsists without any composition, i.e. the simple”.
6. In the case of 5a, however – where composition cannot be removed – the composite would “not consist of substances”. (This is because substances are such that composition can always be removed from them: “composition is only a contingent relation of substances, apart from which, as beings persisting by themselves, they must subsist”.)
7. The thought that the composite does not consist of substances is, however, directly at odds with our initial presupposition, namely that there are composite *substances*.
8. 5a must, therefore, be rejected, which leaves only 5b: “namely that what is a substantial composite in the world consists of simple parts”. The thesis has thus been proven by showing that its opposite is self-contradictory and impossible (CPR B 462, 464).

We will consider Hegel’s criticism of this proof in a moment; but, even without invoking Hegel, it is clear that the proof is problematic. The problem is that Kant does not do what he claims to do: he does not prove the thesis by presupposing its opposite, but he presupposes the thesis in the very process of proving it. This is not initially apparent but becomes apparent in points 6 and 7.

At first the beginning of the proof seems unproblematic: substance is taken to be thoroughly composite, and so all there is held to be are composites. This is expressed in the statement that “composite substances do not consist of simple parts” (point 1). The argument from point 2 to 5 then goes like this: if

all that exists are composites and you *remove* composition “in thought” (that is, you think it away), you remove everything and leave nothing behind; substance, however, cannot be removed; removing composition thus means that the composites were not actually *substances* to start with – that “no substance [would] have been given” – and that we were confronted with non-substantial composites. This, however, is absurd, since the assumption from which we begin is precisely that we are faced with composite substances. We are thus forced to choose between two alternatives: *either* (5a) substances are composite through and through, and so composition (as identical with substance) *cannot* be removed; *or* (5b) substances are not thoroughly composite but have simple parts, in which case composition *can* be removed and leaves simple substances behind.

So far, so good; but when Kant now considers the first option (5a), he highlights a feature of composite substance that is not initially apparent in point 1. The German for “composite substance” is “*zusammengesetzte Substanz*” (put-together substance), and in the singular this simply suggests the idea of a substance composite in itself. The plural, however, can suggest both substances that are composite in themselves *and* substances that have been “put together” to form composites. Kant evidently equates these two meanings: a composite substance just is a composite *of*, and so consists *of*, substances. Yet this is not obvious at the start of the proof, but only becomes clear in points 6 and 7, in which Kant sets out the necessary consequence of affirming 5a.

In point 6 Kant insists that if composition cannot be removed (as in 5a), then the composite would not “consist of” (*bestehen aus*) substances. The reason he gives is this: composition is a “contingent relation of substances, apart from which [. . .] they must subsist”; so in the case of substances, composition is something that *can* be removed; thus, if composition *cannot* be removed, the composite cannot consist of substances. Kant then argues (in point 7) that this conclusion, reached in point 6, “contradicts the presupposition” of the whole proof, and that, consequently, 5a, which leads to this conclusion, must be rejected. (This in turn requires us to affirm 5b, which is the thesis we are seeking to prove.) Grier summarizes Kant’s argument in points 6 and 7 as follows: if we end up “with an irreducible composite”, this “would not be a composite *of* substances, and so contradicts the assumption that we are talking about *composite substance*”.⁴ Yet it is not immediately clear that this is true. The presupposition of the apagogic proof is that there are composite substances with no simple parts: Kant does not state at the outset that these are composites *of* substances, but they are just said to be substances that are composite. The thought that there would be no composite *of* substances does not, therefore, obviously contradict the assumption that begins the proof. The very fact, however, that Kant does now see a contradiction between points 6 and 1 reveals that our initial understanding of point 1 requires revision: for it shows

retrospectively that he must actually have understood a “composite substance” to be a composite *of* substances in the first place.

Now one might wonder why this should matter. It matters because the assertion, as Kant presents it, that a composite consists *of* substances amounts to the assertion that it consists of *simple* substances; the latter, however, is precisely the *thesis* that is to be proven. Consider point 6 in more detail. As we have seen, Kant justifies the claim that an *irreducible* composite would not consist of substances by explaining what it means for a composite to “consist of” substances. In the latter case, Kant writes, “composition is only a contingent relation of substances, apart from which, as beings persisting by themselves, they must subsist”. So, when composites consist of substances, those substances must be able to exist *without* forming a composite. Accordingly, composition must be something that can be removed from them (and if composition cannot be removed, the composite is not composed of substances). Yet note that if composition is not an irreducible feature of substances and can always be removed from them, such that they are left to persist “by themselves” (*für sich*), they in turn must be *simple* entities.

One might perhaps think that when substances no longer form a composite together, they could still be composite *within* themselves. Yet this cannot be the case here, because, as we have seen, *being* a composite substance, for Kant, just is being composed *of* substances; in this case all composition is a contingent relation between the substances and so can be removed from them; what is left when composition is removed must, therefore, be substances that are simple. The claim made in point 6 is thus, if not in so many words, that “every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts”. This, however, is precisely the thesis that we are trying to prove. That thesis, therefore, does not just emerge at the end of the apagogic proof as the legitimate conclusion of the latter, but it is inserted into the proof itself – in a parenthesis in 6 – as a self-evident assumption. Indeed, the thesis cannot be the conclusion of the proof without already being assumed in point 6: for 5b (the thesis) is proven to be true by showing 5a to be untenable, but the latter is rejected only on the assumption (in 6) that the thesis is true.

Moreover, not only does Kant assume the thesis in 6, but he also projects that thesis back into the initial presupposition of the proof. He does so when he maintains (in 7) that that presupposition would be *contradicted* by the consequence of 5a. This consequence, as we know, is that composites would *not* “consist of substances”; it contradicts the initial presupposition, however, only if we assume at the start that composites *do* “consist of substances” – substances that (by virtue of the parenthesis in 6) must be simple. The consequence of 5a “contradicts the presupposition”, therefore, only if we assume at the start of the proof that the thesis is true. This is not to say that Kant’s proof of the thesis begins by explicitly assuming the thesis; the proof

begins by assuming the *antithesis*: “composite substances do *not* consist of simple parts” and so are thoroughly composite. In point 6, however, Kant reveals that a “composite substance” is in fact a composite of *simple* substances, and in point 7 he projects this newly revealed fact back into the initial assumption. The opening assumption that substance is thoroughly composite, and so does not consist of simples, thus turns out *in retrospect* to presuppose the simples that are to be proven. This is because “being a composite substance”, for Kant, just *means* “being composed of simples” (though he only makes this explicit in the course of the proof).

Note that Kant appears to be unaware of the question-begging, and thus problematic, character of the proof. He thinks that the proof illegitimately assumes a “world” to be given with a complete set of parts, but otherwise he takes it to be valid. He indicates this in his discussion of the antithesis: “for a whole made up of substances thought through the pure understanding” – but not taken to be actually given – “it might very well hold that prior to all composition of such substances we must have a simple” (CPR B 469).⁵ The problem we have just highlighted, therefore, does not merely belong to an argument from which Kant preserves his distance; it besets an argument for which he says he will “vouch” and with which he thus identifies (see P 131 / 103 [§ 52a]). That is to say, the problem lies in the proof not only as the advocate of the thesis, but also as Kant himself, presents it.

Kant's argument in support of the thesis is in fact even more problematic than I have suggested: for, as Grier points out, it implicitly “exploits a purely conceptual necessity”, namely, that the very “concept of a composite” – and not just that of a “composite substance” – “commits us to the concept of the simple, which externally relates to comprise it”.⁶ Grier does not note, however, that this makes a mockery of the claim that the thesis is proven “apagogically” – a claim that not only the advocate of the thesis, but also Kant himself (if we set aside transcendental realism), takes seriously. The proof of the thesis cannot be apagogic, if being “composite” simply means being “composed of simples”, for we cannot begin with sheer composition and then *prove* that it entails simple parts. Simple parts must, rather, be assumed at the start to be intrinsic to composition, and the thesis thereby presupposed with the antithesis that is stated in point 1. Kant's “proof” of the thesis is thus in truth no proof at all, but merely the assertion of the thesis, dressed up as a proof. This, indeed, is Hegel's charge against Kant's argument in support of the thesis: that argument merely offers the illusion of a proof because the thesis is actually “an analytic or *tautological* proposition” (SL 159 / LS 201).

In the course of his logic Hegel shows that the two constituent moments of quantity are discreteness and continuity, and that each moment contains the other within itself. Initially, however, quantity is the *unity* of continuity and discreteness, so the moment of continuity predominates in it: quantity is

continuity that contains discreteness that in turn contains *continuity* (see 1: 305). This in turn means the following: since the continuity of quantity contains discreteness, quantity must be divisible; yet since discreteness itself forms a *continuity*, there are no fundamental parts, or purely discrete atoms, of quantity to be reached. Kant's second antinomy, in Hegel's view, has its ultimate source in this two-sidedness at the heart of quantity. Yet, as Hegel recognizes, Kant explicitly opposes discreteness or "simplicity" not to continuity as such but rather to "*composition*" (*Zusammensetzung*). The thesis of the second antinomy is thus that "every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts", and the antithesis is that "no composite thing" does so.

For Hegel, however, the composite, unlike the continuous, is "not in and for itself *one* [*Eines*]", is not an unbroken unity, but is rather "something only externally connected" (SL 159 / LS 201). It is precisely something that has been *put together* (*zusammengesetzt*) out of things that are not intrinsically bound to one another. Since such things do not form a composite by their nature, they must in themselves be quite separate from one another, and so simply be what they are. Accordingly, the parts out of which a composite is formed must be *simple*. The thesis is thus tautological, in Hegel's view, because it follows from the structure, not just of a composite substance, but of the composite *as such*: it is (to use Grier's phrase) a "conceptual necessity" that a composite consists of simples. This is not to say that simples are the ground of everything, but they are built into the very idea of a "composite", or what is externally "put-together", from the start. There is, therefore, no need to prove the thesis, for it is true by definition. The "proof" that Kant provides is thus "a *detour* which will prove quite superfluous" (SL 159 / LS 201).⁷

Hegel nonetheless proceeds to examine Kant's proof in some detail, and he finds the first part of it (that is, points 1 to 3) to be "quite correct". As he summarizes it, "if there is nothing but what is composite, and one thinks away all that is composite, nothing at all is left. – One will grant this" (SL 160 / LS 202). Yet he immediately sets the whole opening argument in 1 to 5 aside as a "tautological superfluity", and suggests that the proof could begin straight away with the two alternatives set out in 5a and 5b. Kant's opening argument is superfluous, in Hegel's view, because it is all too obvious: if, after removing all composition, we were left with nothing, no substances remain; "but we must have substances, since we have assumed them" (SL 161 / LS 203); we can't be left with nothing, therefore, but must choose between 5a and 5b.

As we have seen, however, we are in fact required to reject 5a and affirm 5b. The reason why we have to do so, Hegel notes, is contained "in a parenthesis", namely the one in point 6. This reason is, indeed, so decisive that Kant could have proceeded directly to it from the initial statement of the thesis, skipping everything in between: "it is clear that the apagogical detour could be omitted and the thesis: 'composite substance consists of simple parts', could be directly

followed by this reason as its proof: *because* composition is merely a *contingent* relation of substances, and is therefore external to them and does not concern the substances themselves" (SL 160 / LS 202).⁸ As Hegel points out, however, the claim that composition is a *contingent, external* relation of substances is not itself "proven" by Kant but is "straightway *assumed* [*angenommen*], indeed casually in a parenthesis, as something self-evident or of secondary importance [*Nebensache*]" (SL 160 / LS 203). This claim in turn immediately implies that the substances themselves are simple, and so directly entails the thesis of the antinomy. That thesis is thus itself assumed to be true in the parenthesis of point 6. It appears at the end of the proof as its conclusion, but only because it has been taken for granted, without further ado, earlier in the proof.

Now, as noted above, the thesis, for Hegel, simply unpacks what is contained in the idea of a "composite". It is "self-evident", therefore, that "composition is a contingent and external determination" and that the parts of a composite are thus themselves *simple*. This claim, which just *is* the thesis, is a tautology, and since that is the case Kant cannot, in one sense, be faulted for assuming it in point 6. He can be faulted, however, for pretending to offer a proof of the thesis, when in fact all he does is assert it in the course of such "proof". Moreover, since the thesis is a tautology, the simplicity of the parts must already be built into the pure composition from which Kant starts his apagogic proof (in point 1). The thesis is thus not just introduced as an assumption in point 6, but in assuming the truth of the *antithesis* at the start of the proof Kant is already assuming the *thesis* to be true (though he appears not to realize this). The whole proof thus serves, in its "useless and strained complexity", to mask the fact "that there is no proof at all but only a presupposition" (SL 161 / LS 204) – the presupposition of a thesis that is self-evident if one starts from the idea of "composition".

In Hegel's view, therefore, Kant's "proof" of the thesis amounts to no more than the extended assertion of the obvious, namely that the divisibility of a composite is not infinite, but reaches its limit in what is simple (or, in Hegel's terminology, "discrete"). Indeed, Hegel writes, Kant's proof asserts the moment of simplicity "on its own, *isolated* from the other [moment]" (SL 158 / LS 200). This latter remark might seem a strange one to make, since Hegel also claims that simplicity is built into, and thus presupposed by Kant along with, *composition*; surely Hegel should praise Kant for thinking simplicity and composition together as a unity. For Hegel, however, composition is not genuinely opposed to simplicity, so the thesis and its proof do not affirm any speculative unity of opposites. Composition is composed of simples by definition; being composite and having simple parts are thus two sides of one coin.⁹

For this reason, Hegel maintains, it is not actually possible to construct an antinomy with the concepts of "simplicity" and "composition"; all one can do is assert, as a tautology, that the parts of a composite are simple (SL 160 / LS

203). *Continuity* is opposed to simplicity (or discreteness) and so can give rise to an antinomy (and a speculative unity), but this is not true of composition. Yet, if this is the case, how can Kant succeed in constructing an antinomy? In Kant's own view, an antinomy arises when we introduce *space*. In Hegel's view, however, space itself has to be conceived in the right way, if what Kant claims is an antinomy is actually to be one.

KANT'S SECOND ANTINOMY: THE ANTITHESIS, ITS PROOF AND HEGEL'S CRITIQUE

According to Kant, the antithesis of the second antinomy is this: "no composite thing in the world consists of simple parts, and nowhere in it does there exist anything simple" (CPR B 463). The accompanying proof of the antithesis proceeds as follows:

1. Assume first that a composite thing or substance *does* consist of simple parts. (This, of course, is the thesis of the antinomy.)
2. Then note that all external relation and all "putting together" of substances – that is, all composition – is possible only in *space*.
3. Since this is the case, there must be as many parts in the space occupied by a composite as in the composite itself.
4. Space itself, however, does not consist of *simple* parts but rather of spaces.¹⁰
5. Each part of a composite must, therefore, occupy *a space*.
6. Now we have assumed in point 1 that the parts of a composite are simple.
7. Accordingly (by virtue of 5), "the simple occupies a space".
8. Yet everything real that occupies a space contains a *manifold* of elements that are external to one another, and so is a composite. Indeed, it is a composite of substances, not just accidents.
9. This means that the *simple*, in occupying a space, must itself be a "substantial *composite*".
10. This, however, is self-contradictory; so no composite in space – which is to say (given 2 above), no composite at all – can have *simple* parts. The antithesis is thus proven "apagogically" by showing that its opposite – the thesis – contradicts itself (CPR B 463).¹¹

Grier points out that "this argument is clearly grounded in the assumption that composite substantiality presupposes space".¹² From Kant's point of view, however, this assumption is justified by the more general assumptions underlying the antinomies.

As we have seen, the thesis and the antithesis of each antinomy take it for granted that appearances in space and time are things in themselves; that is, they presuppose transcendental realism.¹³ They also take such things to constitute a given *totality* or *world*. This world includes “the whole series of all conditions” of things (CPR B 525), and in the second antinomy these conditions are the *parts* into which things are divided. Since the world, on this view, is something given, and so determinate, it must be either finite or infinite; the number of parts in the world must thus also be finite or infinite.¹⁴

Now, since appearances are held to be things in themselves, the understanding proceeds, in Grier's words, to “deduce consequences about appearances from concepts alone” (which are assumed to disclose the nature of things in themselves).¹⁵ In particular, the understanding takes the composite as such to be composed of simples and from this premise derives the thesis that composite things in the world are divided into a finite number of simple parts. As Grier points out, this conclusion is reached by *abstracting* from the fact that the things of the world are in space and time – an abstraction that is justified by the assumption that such things are things in themselves and so determinable by pure understanding alone.¹⁶ Yet it is appearances *in space and time* that are deemed to be things in themselves. Reason and the understanding are thus equally justified in insisting that all composite things in the world are in space, as occurs in the proof of the antithesis of the second antinomy. This antinomy is generated, therefore, by the fact that the same set of (supposedly) given worldly things must be understood both *without* regard to space and also as *in* space. (This does not mean, by the way, that the antithesis presupposes the transcendental “ideality” of space. The antithesis assumes that things are spatial, but, as Grier points out, “space is there held to have mind independence”. This is because, as we have stressed, both the thesis and the antithesis presuppose transcendental realism.)¹⁷

It was argued in the last chapter (1: 335) that antinomies are grounded in an ambiguity inherent in the very idea of the “world” or the totality of appearances. This ambiguity resides in the fact that the world can, and must, be considered as “unconditioned” in two ways. The series of appearances can have the unconditioned as its first member, but the series as a whole can also be unconditioned. In the first case, the series will have a limit or an endpoint and so be finite, whereas in the second case, in which there is no unconditioned first member, the series will be infinite and “without limits” (CPR B 445). We now see that a second ambiguity is connected to this first one: the series of appearances is judged to be finite when such appearances are taken to be pure *things in themselves* and their spatio-temporal character is ignored, and the series is judged to be infinite when such appearances, as things in themselves, are taken to be *in* space and time. As Grier notes, Kant associates the two ways of conceiving of things in the world with “Platonism” and “Epicureanism”: in

her words, “Plato presumes that the matter of being is logically independent of space-time”, whereas “Epicurus [. . .] conceives of reality as coextensive with space-time”.¹⁸ The distinction between them is not, however, an historical contingency, but it is rooted in, and justified by, the nature of reason, specifically reason’s idea of the world. This idea requires the world to be conceived as an absolute, unconditioned totality – and therefore as a thing in itself – *and* as a set of appearances – and therefore as spatio-temporal. This is why the two conceptions of the world are found in philosophies other than those of Plato and Epicurus.

It is true that, for Kant, an antinomy or contradiction, in the strict sense, is not produced merely by the ambiguous *idea* of the world, that is, by the mere idea of an ambiguous world. An antinomy arises only when that ambiguous world is judged actually to exist, for in this case, despite its ambiguity, that world has to be one thing *or* the other. This judgement in turn stems from succumbing to transcendental realism: for the transcendental realist does not merely conflate appearances with things in themselves in thought, but judges them to be things in themselves that *actually exist*. Having said this, what ultimately justifies understanding the world of appearances in both the “Platonic” and the “Epicurean” way is the ambiguity in the *idea* of that world, that is, in the very thought of appearances as a totality of things in themselves.

From Kant’s perspective, therefore, the proponent of the antithesis in the second antinomy is quite justified in claiming (in point 2 of the proof of that antithesis) that composites are possible only in space. For Hegel, however, this claim is a mere assumption that is simply asserted in the course of the proof. Moreover, the proof also contains a further assumption: namely that “*space does not consist of simple parts*” (SL 162 / LS 204-5). (This is point 4 of the proof, and is echoed in point 8, when Kant maintains that everything real in space contains a *manifold* of external elements and so is a composite). Taken together, Hegel contends, these two assumptions undermine Kant’s claim to provide an apagogic *proof* of the antithesis. This is partly because they are mere assumptions, but also – and more importantly – because they amount to the direct assertion of the antithesis itself: the claim that the composite has no simple parts.

Kant begins from the thesis that a composite *does* consist of simple parts, and he then “proves” the antithesis by showing that the thesis leads to a contradiction and so must be rejected. The contradiction arises for the following reason: composites and their parts are possible only in space (points 2 and 5); space, however, does not consist of simple parts, but rather of spaces in which *everything is composite* (points 4 and 8); yet we assumed to begin with that the parts of a composite are simple (points 1 and 6); the *simple*, in occupying a space, must therefore itself be *composite*, which is contradictory (points 9 and 10). Since the thesis leads to this contradiction, it must be rejected in favour of the antithesis, and in this way the latter is proven “apagogically” by showing

the former to be untenable. In Hegel's view, however, the thesis is proven to be contradictory on the basis of mere assumptions (especially in 2, 4 and 8). Moreover, these assumptions themselves, taken together, directly assert the antithesis to be true: for they state, precisely, that space and the composite things in it – which are the only composites there can be – *have no simple parts*. The thesis proves to be self-contradictory, therefore, and so makes the antithesis necessary, only because the antithesis is taken for granted in the course of the proof.

Hegel thus declares the “apagogical” form of Kant's proof to be a “baseless illusion” (SL 162 / LS 204). Kant does, indeed, begin with the thesis; but he then simply asserts the antithesis, and on that basis “proves” that the thesis leads to contradiction. The antithesis is itself “proven”, therefore, by first being presupposed, and so is not in fact *proven* at all. In Hegel's own words,

the assumption that *everything substantial is spatial*, but that *space does not consist of simple parts*, is a direct assertion [*eine direkte Behauptung*] which is made the immediate ground of what is to be proved, and with it the whole proof is already finished.

—SL 162 / LS 204-5

Hegel then goes on to highlight what he sees as a further problem with Kant's proof: namely, that it implicitly supports the *thesis* as much as the antithesis. In that proof Kant begins by explicitly affirming the thesis – that a composite substance has simple parts – but, of course, he does so with the intention of disproving it. He then claims that “every external relation between substances, hence every composition of them, is possible only in *space*”, which “does not consist of simple parts” (see points 2 and 4). This claim, taken together with the thesis, thus immediately produces a contradiction (namely that simples are irreducibly composite), and this in turn proves that the antithesis must be true. In Hegel's view, however, Kant overlooks, or “forgets”, an obvious implication of his claim. The first part of the claim, in Hegel's wording, is “that all composition from [*aus*] substances is an *external* relation” (SL 162 / LS 205), and it is the implication of this statement in particular that Kant forgets as he proceeds. For Hegel, the implication is this: if all composition from substances is an *external* relation, and all composition is “possible only in *space*”, then “spatiality itself [. . .] is for the substances an external relation”. This in turn means that space “does not touch their nature”, any more than composition does, and that they must thus be non-spatial and simple in themselves. That then means that the composites they form have simples for their parts, just as the thesis asserts.

In arguing in this way, however, Hegel might himself be accused of forgetting that Kant understands being “composite” and “external” in *two* distinct ways

– or, rather, that he takes the parties to the antinomy to understand it in different ways. Both parties agree that composition is an external relation between substances; yet both also conflate appearances with things in themselves. This in turn introduces an ambiguity into the concept of being “composite” (and “external”) that each party exploits for its own ends: the proponent of the thesis takes the composite to be a pure *thing in itself* (and so to consist of simples), whereas the proponent of the antithesis takes it to be an appearance *in space* (and so not to consist of simples). Grier explains the point nicely as follows:

the thesis inference to the simple exploits an ambiguity in the term “composite”. If composition really is a *merely* external relation, then it presupposes self-subsisting, simple (and so ultimately nonextended, nonspatial) substances. The antithesis also exploits this ambiguity, arguing that precisely because composition is an *external* relation, it presupposes as its condition space.¹⁹

In Kant’s view, therefore, the proponent of the antithesis does not use the term “composite” in precisely the same sense as the proponent of the thesis does; for this reason the former (unlike the latter) denies that composites have simple parts. Hegel assumes, by contrast, that being “composite” and “external” means the *same* in the antithesis as in the thesis; for this reason he claims that, in the proof of the antithesis, composition and space should both be judged to be external to substances, and the latter, even though they are put together in space to form composites, must thus be the *simple* parts of such composites, just as the thesis affirms. In this respect, therefore, Hegel appears to misunderstand the proof of the antithesis.

Yet Hegel does not in fact misunderstand Kant’s proof. He is making a point that, in his view, Kant himself should have acknowledged in the proof (and that he implicitly relies on in the proof of the thesis): namely, that a composite, as an *external* collection of substances, is *by definition* composed of things that are themselves untouched by composition and so simple. This is true, for Hegel, whether the composite is non-spatial *or* spatial: being “put together” *in space* is no less external, and so a matter of indifference, to the substances concerned than any other kind of composition. Hegel is well aware that, *for Kant*, the introduction of space into the proof of the antithesis changes how a “composite” is to be understood (compared to the thesis). His point, however, is that space doesn’t make the difference here that Kant thinks it does: because there is nothing an external composite can be, under *any* circumstances, but a composite of *simples*.

In Hegel’s view, therefore, as soon as the proponent of the antithesis agrees that there are “composites” and that composition is an “external” relation

between substances, he is committed to the very *thesis* he aims to disprove. The proof of the antithesis is thus not opposed to the proof of thesis in the way Kant thinks it is. This is precisely why Hegel claims, when considering the thesis, that the concept of composition cannot actually give rise to an *antinomy* (SL 160 / LS 203). The “composite” and the “simple” cannot be opposed to one another, as an antinomy requires, because they are two sides of the same coin: the composite just *is* that which is composed of simples. This statement, as Hegel puts it, is “*tautological*” (SL 159 / LS 201). If one accepts that there are “composites”, therefore, the thesis of the second antinomy is correct, however the rest of the proof proceeds. The proof of the antithesis thus implicitly supports, indeed presupposes, the thesis as much as the official proof of the latter does (and note that it does so, not in point 1 where the thesis is explicitly presupposed for strategic reasons, but in point 2 and what follows from it).

Nevertheless Kant is right, in Hegel's eyes, to oppose *space* to what is simple in the proof of the antithesis. This is because space is *continuous*, and continuity is, indeed, opposed to pure simplicity (or pure discreteness). Kant is right, therefore, to insist that the divisibility of things generates an antinomy (though, for Hegel in contrast to Kant, the antinomy is resolvable through pure logic). Yet the manner in which Kant presents that antinomy threatens to do away with it before it has arisen: for, in the proof of the antithesis, he conceives of space as the ground of being-composite, and so as being composite itself rather than continuous;²⁰ and this in turn requires space, and the things in it, to have simple parts, just like the composite substances that are the subject of the thesis. Note that one cannot just blame the proponent of the antithesis for this misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, of space; the misunderstanding is Kant's, too, since he endorses the proof of the antithesis (provided, of course, that we set aside the transcendental realism it presupposes).

Hegel argues, therefore, that Kant's conception of space in that proof is in fact inconsistent: for, after asserting (in point 2) that space is the ground of being-composite, Kant then states (in point 4) that “space does not consist of simple parts”; yet in saying this he implicitly maintains that space itself is *not composite* but continuous. As Hegel puts it, Kant's statement (in point 4) thus brings “the continuity of space into collision with composition”; indeed, it “substitutes” the former for the latter (SL 163 / LS 206). This substitution, in Hegel's view, reflects Kant's own considered, and in this respect correct, understanding of space. Earlier in the first *Critique*, Hegel reminds us, Kant maintains explicitly that space is “one *single*” space (*ein einiger*), and that “the parts of it rest only on limitations [*Einschränkungen*], so that they do not come *before* the one all-encompassing space as if they were its *constituent parts* from which its *composition* would be possible” (SL 163 / LS 206; see also CPR B 39). In this passage, therefore, “continuity is quite rightly and unequivocally said of space”, as opposed to the idea of “composition”. When

Kant implicitly suggests in the proof of the antithesis that space is continuous, he is thus introducing his own understanding of space and correctly contrasting it with the composite of simples affirmed in the thesis.²¹ Unfortunately, however, he then reverts to the idea that space is composite, when he states (in point 8) that everything real in space is a “manifold of elements *situated* outside one another” and “thus a composite” (SL 163 / LS 206, and CPR B 463).

Kant’s proof of the antithesis is thus confused. In Hegel’s view, however, if we free it of “all useless superfluity” (SL 163 / LS 207) – namely the connection of space with composition – and stick to what is implicit in it, then the proof can be seen to pit the unbroken *continuity* of space against the idea that things have purely simple, discrete parts. Yet Kant still does not *prove* that space lacks such parts, and so is continuous: he simply asserts it (in point 4). Indeed, the whole antinomy, as Hegel sees it, consists in the mere assertion of continuity (in the antithesis) and discreteness (in the thesis) against one another:

the proof of the antithesis, by transposing substances into space, contains the dogmatic [*assertorisch*] assumption of *continuity*, just as the proof of the thesis, by assuming that composition is the mode of relation of what is substantial, contains the dogmatic assumption of the *contingency of this relation*, and hence the assumption that substances are *absolute ones* [*absolute Eins*].

—SL 163 / LS 207

In this way, Hegel claims, “the whole antinomy thus reduces itself to the separation of the two moments of quantity and the direct assertion [*Behauptung*] of the two, precisely as simply separate” (SL 163 / LS 207) – though, since each moment is asserted to be equally necessary, they are also presented as being inseparable from, and in contradiction with, one another.²²

We have seen that Hegel is interested above all in the *categories* (in his sense) that he sees as underlying Kant’s antinomies (see EL 91 / 126 [§ 48 R]). For Hegel, therefore, what is significant about the second antinomy is not what it says about the “world”, or even about space, but the fact that it opposes the two sides of pure *quantity* – discreteness and continuity – to one another (or, at least, does so if we remove “composition” from the antithesis and its proof). Now in the last chapter we identified the “finite” and the “infinite” as key categories that, in Hegel’s view, underlie the antinomies (see 1: 341). Discreteness and continuity, however, are both derived specifically from the true infinite or “being-for-self”; so one might think that, from a Hegelian perspective, Kant’s second antinomy simply pits this true infinite against itself. Yet there is, of course, a difference between discreteness and continuity. The discrete one contains the moment of repulsion and negation, and so is *separate* from other such ones (even though it has also lost its negative edge and become “coalescent discreteness” [*zusammenfliessende Diskretion*], thereby giving rise

to continuity). Continuity, on the other hand, is "simple, self-same relation to itself unbroken by any limit or exclusion" (even though it is constituted precisely by the continuing of the discrete outside itself) (SL 154 / LS 194-5). The discrete thus leans more in the direction of the finite, whereas continuity is explicitly unending, infinite being.

The opposition, implicit in Kant's antinomy, between discreteness and continuity thus coincides in Hegel's mind with that between the finite and the infinite. In that opposition the "discrete", in the form of simple parts, are quite separate and distinct from one another – or "simply divided" – and in that sense purely finite. The process of division that leads to these discrete parts is also finite, since it reaches its limit in the latter (and, indeed, the number of discrete parts is itself assumed to be finite [see 1: 353]). On the other hand, the "continuous" has *no* simple, finite parts, and so is just continuous, unending being. The continuous is also "infinite" in another sense (namely, that of the "progress to infinity"): for, in not already being divided into parts, it is susceptible to division without end and so is *infinitely divisible*. In Hegel's eyes, therefore, Kant's second antinomy implicitly expresses the following contrast between categories:

when substance, matter, space, time, etc. are taken only as *discrete*, they are simply divided [*schlechthin geteilt*]; their principle is the one [*Eins*]. When they are taken as *continuous*, this one is only a sublated one; division remains divisibility [*Teilbarkeit*], it remains the *possibility* of division, as possibility, without actually coming to the atom.

—SL 163-4 / LS 207

Note that in connecting continuity with the mere possibility of division, Hegel removes not only composition but also the idea of the "world" from the antithesis. In Kant's view, both the thesis and antithesis of an antinomy assume that such a world is actually given and comprises the "whole series of all conditions" of appearances (CPR B 525). In the second antinomy, these conditions are equated with the *parts* of things. Accordingly, both the thesis and antithesis assume that all such parts are actually given; that is, they assume the "complete division", or actual dividedness, of things into parts (CPR B 440). The difference between them, therefore, must be that one takes the set of parts to be finite (because it includes a definite number of simples), whereas the other takes that set to be infinite: as Grier puts it, "if there is some set of ultimate 'particles', then the set itself is either finite or not".²³ The claim in the antithesis, as Kant presents it, is thus not just that things are infinitely *divisible*, but that "everything has to be divided [*geteilt*] to infinity" (CPR B 509).

When Hegel turns to the antithesis, however, he uncouples the thought that things are divisible from the thought that they are already divided, and he

retains the former while setting the latter aside. He does so because the latter thought belongs to the “useless superfluity” that he takes to encumber Kant’s presentation of the antinomies. For Kant, the thought that things are already divided is the thought that all their parts are given (whether as a finite or an infinite set). This is a variant of the thought that all the conditions of things are given, and that in turn is simply the thought that a whole *world* is given. Both the thesis and antithesis presuppose this latter thought, but Hegel regards it as redundant. In his view, the “cosmological” form that Kant gives to the thesis and antithesis – their reference to the “world” – is not what is of interest in them; what is important are solely the categories or “thought determinations” that they express (SL 158 / LS 199). Accordingly, Hegel extracts from Kant’s antithesis “the dogmatic assumption of *continuity*” *without* any “world” in which it could inhere (SL 163 / LS 207). Such continuity thus entails being divisible, but does not contain an actual totality of parts, actual dividedness: it is divisibility as mere *possibility* “without actually coming to the atom”. (The discrete, by way, are “simply divided”, even when the idea of the world is dropped, because such dividedness is built into discreteness itself – at least, that is, when the latter is considered in abstraction from and opposition to continuity.)

Note that Hegel considers continuity, so understood, still to be one-sided, just like the corresponding thought of simple discreteness: Kant’s second antinomy, for Hegel, implicitly asserts the two moments of quantity as “simply separate” (SL 164 / LS 207) (though also as equally necessary and in that sense as inseparable). In Hegel’s own view, however, each moment in truth incorporates the other *within* itself. On the one hand, “the moment of the atom lies in continuity itself, for this is simply the possibility of division”; that is to say, continuity is not just sheer, abstract divisibility but the possibility of being divided *into units*, or, as Hegel puts it earlier, quantity as continuous is “the *real possibility* of the one” (SL 155 / LS 196). On the other hand, discreteness, which by itself consists in such “dividedness” (*Geteiltsein*), negates itself and forms an unbroken *continuity*, because all discrete units are the same and the discrete thus continues beyond itself, and relates to itself, in the others outside it (SL 164 / LS 207).²⁴ Each of the two opposed sides – continuity and discreteness – thus contains its other within itself and so constitutes a unity with that other: the unity that is quantity. This unity, in Hegel’s view, represents the true, speculative *resolution* of Kant’s second antinomy.

Kant, of course, provides his own “resolution” of each antinomy, but it falls short of what is demanded by Hegel (see 1: 342-3). As we have seen, Kant denies that any “world” or “totality” of appearances is given as something in itself, to which the thesis and antithesis of an antinomy could apply. He does so because, in his view, nothing *in itself* can be given to us, and *appearances* are given only in the progressive or regressive synthesis of them and so are never

given all at once (see e.g. CPR B 527-9). Kant's denial deprives both the thesis and antithesis of their common object of reference and so shows them to be false insofar they purport to apply to the same given world. It thus removes, and so "resolves", the antinomy or contradiction at a stroke (or at least it does so in Kant's view).²⁵ Kant's resolution of the antinomies does not, however, bring together into a speculative *unity* the opposing categories that Hegel takes to underlie those antinomies, but it simply leaves them distinct from one another. In the case of the second antinomy, Hegel sees a fundamental division between discreteness and continuity in the antinomy itself. It is evident from what Kant himself says, however, that these categories remain distinct from one another, for Kant, even after the antinomy has been resolved.

As we remarked in the last chapter (note 85), the theses and antitheses of the "mathematical" antinomies cannot be true at all as they stand: for, even if we reject the conflation by transcendental realism of appearances with things in themselves, the series of appearances and their conditions can never form a totality or "world" that could be finite or infinite. By contrast, the theses and antitheses in the "dynamical" antinomies could both be true as they stand, if we reject transcendental realism and the idea that appearances form a totality, because they could be taken to apply to different realms, namely the purely intelligible (in the case of the theses) and the phenomenal, spatio-temporal (in the case of the antitheses) (see CPR B 557-60). One should note, however, that, in Kant's view, the thesis of the second mathematical antinomy can be reconceived – quite apart from the antithesis – so that it too could be true. This requires us to abandon transcendental realism, as well as the idea that the thesis applies to the same totality or "world" of appearances as the antithesis. We must regard the thesis, rather, as a claim about purely intelligible things or substances as they are *thought* to be in themselves: namely, the claim that "prior to all composition of such substances we must have a simple" (CPR B 469). Kant indicates his cautious endorsement of this claim by stating that "it might very well hold [*gelten*]", but Grier goes further and suggests that "Kant takes this inference" – from the composite to the simple – "to be analytically true and acceptable if it concerns ideas only".²⁶ (Indeed, she points out that Kant implicitly exploits this "conceptual necessity" in his official argument for the thesis [see 1: 349].) For Kant, therefore, even after the second antinomy has been resolved, it is conceivably true that substances in themselves are simples, or, to put it another way, it is conceptually necessary that they be *thought* to be simple.

Note, however, that such simplicity – or "discreteness" – is held by Kant to belong to intelligible substances *without* any moment of continuity. The latter is in turn set apart from such discreteness by Kant by being identified with space, the a priori form of appearances. This is evident, for example, in Kant's claim that space is a "single" space and his corresponding claim that "space and

time do not consist of simple parts” (CPR B 39, 468).²⁷ It is also suggested by Kant’s contention – which must not be confused with the antithesis of the second antinomy – that “a whole that is given in intuition” (such as a limited area of space) is “divisible to infinity” but does not “*consist of [bestehen aus] infinitely many parts*”. It is true that Kant does not mention continuity in this context explicitly, but the latter is implicitly attributed to the “whole” given in intuition in Kant’s claim that such a whole is divisible without being already *divided* into discrete units (CPR B 551-2).²⁸ Now the very fact that Kant regards such a whole as divisible at all means that the latter, and thus space itself, is not purely continuous without any moment of discreteness whatever. Nonetheless, continuity and discreteness, in the form of divisibility and being-divided-into-simples, are set over against one another by Kant by being assigned to the phenomenal and purely intelligible realms respectively.

Kant’s resolution of the antinomies makes good sense from his own perspective. From Hegel’s perspective, however, it is deficient because it rests on the doctrine of transcendental idealism – the thesis that appearances in space and time are not things in themselves – but that doctrine presupposes quite *uncritically* the conceptual distinction between “appearance” and what is “in itself”, as well as between “form” and “matter” (see volume 1, chapter 2). Furthermore, in the case of the second antinomy, Kant’s resolution leaves the thought of discreteness – in the form of “simple parts” – quite *distinct* from the thought of continuous divisible space, when in truth continuity and discreteness (or “the moment of the atom”) are moments of one another and so form an indissoluble *unity* (SL 164 / LS 207). Kant’s resolution is deficient, therefore, because it relies on, and returns us to, the understanding’s one-sided conception of concepts and categories.

HEGEL ON ZENO AND ARISTOTLE

In Hegel’s view, Kant fails to resolve the antinomies properly because he does not examine directly the concepts or categories that underlie them (see SL 165 / LS 209). By contrast, Hegel discards Kant’s “ideas”, “world” and transcendental idealism – as uncritically presupposed – and focuses precisely on those categories, which in the case of the second antinomy are discreteness and continuity. Furthermore, he examines the categories, not as they are ordinarily or traditionally conceived, but as they emerge in a genuinely presuppositionless, and thus fully self-critical, logic. Such logic, as we have seen, resolves the contradiction between discreteness and continuity by showing them to be moments of one another and thus to form a unity.

Yet Hegel does not regard his understanding of these categories as utterly unprecedented. He credits Kant with distinguishing continuity from composition in the Transcendental Aesthetic (even if such continuity remains one-sided). He

also praises Aristotle's understanding of continuity contained in his "truly speculative concepts of space, time and motion" (SL 164 / LS 208). Aristotle presents this understanding in the course of discussing Zeno's paradoxes of motion.²⁹

For Kant, contradiction belongs to the "world" because reason, *our* reason, illegitimately assumes that that "world" exists and applies mutually exclusive concepts to it. In Hegel's view, this renders the contradiction highlighted by Kant ultimately subjective: it belongs in truth "*only* to thinking reason, to the *essence of spirit*" (EL 92 / 127 [§ 48 R]). By contrast, Hegel considers the contradiction or "dialectic" disclosed by Zeno to be more objective: it belongs strictly to the *object* under consideration.³⁰ This is not to say that it belongs to *being*: for, as a follower of Parmenides, Zeno – on Hegel's interpretation – takes being to be pure unity and self-identity without negation or contradiction.³¹ Contradiction, in Zeno's view, belongs only to the things of common sense. For common sense itself, such things are not contradictory, but show through their variety and mutability that being is not just pure unity as Parmenides believes. For Zeno, however, such things *are* contradictory, and the fact that they are proves that they lack true being. Being thus remains pure unity without contradiction, variety or change.³² (Both Zeno and Kant, therefore, display a "tenderness" towards being, since both take being in itself to be free of contradiction.)

Hegel clearly regards Zeno more highly than Kant, insofar as "the sense of Zeno's dialectic is more objective than that of this modern [Kantian] dialectic" and so in this respect is closer to Hegel's own immanent dialectic (LHP 2: 69-70 / VGP 2: 69). Yet Hegel's Kant insists that the production of antinomies – or "dialectic" – is "*a necessary activity of reason*", whereas Zeno's dialectic is contingent on the givens of common sense to which the opponents of Parmenides draw attention, and in this respect Kant is actually the more significant figure in Hegel's view.³³ Furthermore, Kant's antinomies assert that *two* mutually exclusive determinations apply equally to one object, and so they point (albeit inadequately) towards Hegel's own speculative idea of a unity of opposites. By contrast, Zeno's "objective" contradiction rests principally on a single, one-sided conception of the matter at hand (and of the relevant categories).³⁴ Indeed, this is what exposes Zeno to criticism by Aristotle, who highlights the side that his predecessor ignores.

Hegel is aware that Zeno also sets out antinomies involving two opposed determinations: Zeno maintains, for example, that "if there are many things, it is necessary that they are both small and large; so small as not to have magnitude, so large as to be unlimited".³⁵ Yet Hegel is mainly interested in Zeno's paradoxes of motion, which involve no antinomy but nonetheless show motion to be contradictory. Zeno takes motion to be contradictory for several reasons, including, for example, the fact that "the arrow in locomotion is motionless".³⁶

Such contradiction in turn renders all motion *impossible*: motion, for Zeno, does not actually exist. This is not to say that he denies the phenomenon or “appearance” (*Erscheinung*) of motion; but he regards it as *mere* appearance with “no true being”: for Zeno, in Hegel’s words, “motion is [. . .] untrue, for it is contradiction”.³⁷

Zeno’s first paradox, known as the “Stadium”, rests on the assertion “that that which is in locomotion must arrive at the half-way stage before it arrives at the goal” (namely, the other end of the stadium).³⁸ This of course means that the half-way stage itself becomes the goal and the moving body must first reach the half-way stage to it. This half-way stage itself then becomes the goal, and so on. Since space can be divided in half an infinite number of times, the body must travel through an infinite number of spaces to traverse the stadium. Indeed, it must do so to reach any goal it may have: *any* space comprises an *infinity* of spaces. The body, however, has only a finite time in which to traverse such an infinity of spaces, and “it is impossible for a thing to pass over or come into contact with infinite things individually in a finite time”. Consequently, it is impossible for the body to reach the end of the stadium or, indeed, to cross *any* space at all. Motion is thus impossible and does not exist. Note that in this case (as in that of the arrow) motion is actually non-existent for two reasons. First, as we have just seen, motion is non-existent by its nature, since it proves not to be *motion* at all and so not to be what it is. Second, this renders it contradictory, but that in turn means that it cannot exist, since all true being is without contradiction.³⁹

Aristotle, in his *Physics*, provides two arguments against Zeno’s “Stadium” paradox. The first consists in noting that, just as any finite space, or “length”, is infinitely divisible, so too is any finite time, and that there is thus an infinity of moments in such a time in which to cover an infinity of spaces. *Pace* Zeno, therefore, it is perfectly possible for a body to pass over infinite things in a finite time and so to *move* in space.⁴⁰

Aristotle’s second argument addresses what he considers to be a lingering inadequacy in the first. That first argument is fine, if Zeno’s claim is taken to be that an infinity of spaces cannot be traversed in finite time. It fails, however, if Zeno’s claim is understood differently. That claim, Aristotle suggests, could be reformulated as follows: it is impossible to complete the task of traversing an *infinite* number of units “either of time or of distance”.⁴¹ In this case, pointing out that a finite time contains an infinity of moments does nothing to resolve Zeno’s paradox: for one cannot get through the task of traversing *any* infinity of individual elements, since such a task is by definition endless. Since this applies to the task of traversing any space (or time) at all, all motion is rendered impossible. This, by the way, is how Hegel understands Zeno’s paradox: “motion would be the running through [*Durchlaufen*] of these infinite moments, [and] never ends; thus what moves cannot reach its goal” (VGPW 1: 306).

Aristotle's solution to this stronger version of the paradox is to challenge the understanding of space, time and quantity on which it is based. If space and quantity consist of an infinity of units that are "actual" (*entelecheia*), then, Aristotle concedes, it is impossible to complete the task of traversing all of them, just as Zeno contends.⁴² Aristotle insists, however, that all magnitude, and thus all space, is in fact continuous, and "though what is continuous contains an infinite number of halves, they are not actual but potential halves".⁴³ Since these infinite halves are only "potential" (*dunamei*), traversing them poses no problem for the moving body, for the latter does not have to come into contact with an endless series of actual points; rather, the body traverses the infinite halves only "in an accidental sense" (*kata sumbebekos*) as it moves through a single, continuous space.⁴⁴ There is nothing contradictory or impossible about motion, therefore, and, *pace* Zeno, motion belongs to the real fabric of the world.

Hegel states in his *Logic* that Aristotle's solution to Zeno's paradoxes "merits high praise" (SL 164 / LS 208). This is not only because Aristotle shows motion to be real, but, more importantly, because he does so by highlighting the *continuity* of quantity that Zeno ignores. Furthermore, Aristotle points out that, thanks to its continuity, quantity contains the possibility of, or "potential" for, infinite division, without actually being divided into an infinity of parts – such possibility being not merely logical but real.⁴⁵ In these respects Aristotle anticipates significant aspects of Hegel's own speculative account of quantity. This in turn explains, I think, why Hegel does not distinguish clearly between Aristotle's critique of Zeno and his own.

Now as we noted above, Hegel praises Zeno for conceiving of contradiction as objective, as belonging to motion itself. Yet he also criticizes Zeno – implicitly, at least – for misunderstanding the true nature of such contradiction. As Hegel explains in his lectures on the history of philosophy and in his philosophy of nature, motion is contradictory because it involves not resting in any one place but "being in this place and at the same time not [being in it]" (VGPW 1: 314).⁴⁶ This contradiction does not render motion impossible, but is constitutive of what motion actually *is*: motion, for Hegel, is actually existing contradiction, or "the dialectic of all that is" (VGPW 1: 305).⁴⁷ By contrast, for Zeno, any contradiction in motion proves it to be unreal and non-existent, because true being by definition lacks all negation and contradiction.

Furthermore, Zeno conceives of the contradiction in motion in a very different way from Hegel. In the "Achilles" paradox, Zeno contends that "in a race the quickest runner can never overtake the slowest"; in the paradox of the "moving rows", he maintains that "half the time is equal to [its] double";⁴⁸ and in the "Stadium" and "Arrow" paradoxes, the contradiction consists in the fact that motion is not actually *motion* – that motion is itself impossible. In the "Stadium" paradox, as we have seen, motion proves to be impossible because it

requires a body to traverse an endless series of actually existing parts. Indeed, all four paradoxes presuppose that space and time are composed of such parts – parts that are quite distinct from one another. As Hegel puts it, therefore, Zeno’s “proofs rest on the infinite *dividedness* [*Geteiltsein*] of space and time”, and thus of quantity (VGPW 1: 305).

For Hegel, however, this conception of quantity is one-sided. Zeno is right to contend that quantity is infinitely divisible, but he equates being divisible with being actually *divided* into wholly discrete parts. In Hegel’s terms, therefore, he sees in quantity only the moment of discreteness, but he ignores the moment of continuity. As Hegel argues, discrete units form a continuity by negating, or “sublating”, their very discreteness.⁴⁹ This means that such continuity does not consist of units that remain wholly *discrete*; and that in turn means that it is not itself *divided* into such units. Since continuity is constituted by the discrete, it is certainly divisible; yet such “*divisibility* is itself only a possibility, not an *existing of the parts*” (SL 165 / LS 209).

This, in Hegel’s view, is precisely the point that Aristotle makes against Zeno: “Aristotle’s general answer and solution [to Zeno’s paradoxes] is that space and time are not infinitely divided [*geteilt*], but only divisible [*teilbar*]” (VGPW 1: 308). Or, as Hegel puts it in the *Logic*:

To infinite divisibility (which, being imagined as actually carried out, is the same as infinite dividedness, as the atoms), on which are based the most famous of those proofs, he [Aristotle] opposes continuity, which applies equally well to time as to space, so that the infinite, that is, abstract plurality is contained only *in principle* [*an sich*], as a *possibility*, in continuity.

—SL 164-5 / LS 208⁵⁰

Hegel reminds us that Pierre Bayle dismissed Aristotle’s arguments against Zeno as “*pitoyable*”, because, in his view, “if matter is infinitely divisible, then it *actually* contains an infinite aggregate of parts” (SL 165 / LS 208-9). From Hegel’s perspective, however, this only goes to show that Bayle did not understand what it means for quantity to be *continuous*. Aristotle, by contrast, understood this well.⁵¹

HEGEL, ARISTOTLE AND KANT ON THE CONTINUITY OF QUANTITY (AND SPACE)

Zeno has a one-sided conception of quantity: he reduces the latter to simple dividedness, separateness or “discreteness”. By contrast, Aristotle – as he is represented by Hegel in the *Logic* – emphasizes the continuity of quantity and points out that, as continuous, quantity is infinitely divisible, but not infinitely divided into discrete parts. Yet does not this very contrast between Zeno and

Aristotle mean that Aristotle's conception of quantity, for all its merits, is itself one-sided? Indeed, it does.⁵² To say this, however, is not to deny that quantity is merely divisible, rather than divided; but it requires us to consider further what such "divisibility" actually involves.

When Hegel concludes his examination of Kant's second antinomy in the *Logic*, he states that, ultimately, the antinomy just asserts the two sides of quantity against one another (see SL 163 / LS 207). The proof of the antithesis, in Hegel's view, is inconsistent, since it switches from composition to continuity and back again, and asserts both concepts against the thesis that things have simple parts. If, however, we drop the idea of composition – which, anyway, is not opposed to that of having simple parts but identical to it – then the proof can be seen to pit unbroken *continuity* against the idea of being divided into simple, discrete units. Hegel then says of such one-sided continuity that it entails "the *possibility* of division, as possibility, without actually coming to the atom". This conception of continuity is, however, precisely the one Hegel attributes to Aristotle in the *Logic*: for Aristotle, too, Hegel maintains, "abstract plurality is contained only *in principle* [*an sich*], as a *possibility*, in continuity" (SL 164-5 / LS 207-8). Hegel's Aristotle, for all his merits, thus puts forward a one-sided conception of quantity that fails to do justice to the moment of discreteness (and so in this respect is not quite as "speculative" as Hegel himself maintains).

Now quantity, for Hegel, is necessarily continuous. Indeed, in quantity's initial immediacy, the moment of continuity actually has priority over that of discreteness. This is because quantity is at first the immediate *unity* of its two moments, and it exhibits the explicit form of unity in being *continuous* (SL 154-5 / LS 195). As continuous, however, quantity is no more than the possibility of division: it is not actually divided into purely discrete parts. Yet if this is the case, how exactly is Aristotle's one-sided conception of quantity to be overcome? How is the moment of discreteness to be incorporated more explicitly into that of continuity? This occurs through a subtle shift of emphasis: continuity as such is the *possibility* of division, but it contains "the moment of the atom" insofar as it is the possibility of *division*, that is, of actually *being divided* (SL 164 / LS 207). This shift of emphasis is not just a matter of expression or presentation, but it indicates that continuity contains more logically than is suggested by Aristotle as Hegel represents him in the *Logic*.

This "more" is made further explicit in Hegel's claim that quantity is "the real possibility of the one [*des Eins*]" (SL 155 / LS 196, emphasis added). Hegel's wording here makes it clear not only that quantity is divisible – that it *can* be divided – but that it is divisible into *discrete units*.⁵³ This does not undermine Aristotle's insight: it remains true that quantity, as continuous, does not already consist of discrete units. Nonetheless, quantity can be divided *into* such units – units that are not already there but arise precisely *through* the division. This is the truly speculative conception of quantity as such.

The discrete units that result from division are not, however, purely and simply discrete. First, they are not distinct from the continuous quantity that is divided into them, but they are discrete units *of* that continuous quantity. Each is thus a continuity in itself, and so is capable of further division into smaller discrete-cum-continuous units (and so on to infinity). Second, as discrete, they are subject to the inherent logic of discreteness. That is to say, through the fact that each is the *same* as, and continues itself in, the others, the discrete form a single *continuity*; or, as Hegel himself puts it, “dividedness, discreteness, sublates all distinction of the ones – for the simple ones are each what the other is – [and], consequently, also contains their sameness and hence their continuity” (SL 164 / LS 207). This continuity is then, of course, capable once again of being divided into discrete units. Just as continuity is inseparable from, and united with, discreteness, therefore, so the latter is in turn inseparable from the former.

None of this, by the way, is to deny that material objects can be broken into discrete pieces definitively – like Humpty Dumpty – and never put back together again. Yet at the point we have reached in the *Logic*, such objects are not the issue.⁵⁴ Hegel is examining “pure quantity” or quantity *as such* – quantity in its initial immediacy – and it unites continuity and discreteness in the way we have described. Quality, he maintains, takes the form of being-different and being-limited – being this, *not* that – as well as of being purely oneself (or “for oneself”). Quantity, however, is the *continuity* formed by discrete units: in contrast to quality, quantity is the kind of being that is not interrupted by the divisions that are introduced into it.

Hegel notes that pure quantity is exemplified by space and time.⁵⁵ Material things in space can be split apart irrevocably, but space itself exhibits the unity of continuity and discreteness that is characteristic of quantity as such. (This is why it is appropriate to consider Zeno’s paradoxes of motion and Aristotle’s solution of them in the section of the *Logic* on quantity.) Space and time are thus divisible into *discrete* points, or “heres” and “nows” (that, within themselves, are also continuous and “extended”);⁵⁶ yet space and time are not already divided into, and do not “consist of”, such points, but they are only the “possibility” thereof and so are *continuous*.⁵⁷ This in turn means that, even if an entity in space were to prove physically resistant to division, the space it occupies would remain infinitely divisible.

In the *Logic* Hegel gives Aristotle credit for emphasizing the continuity and mere divisibility of quantity, but he does not say that Aristotle takes such continuity to be divisible *into discrete units*. In this sense, Aristotle’s conception of quantity, as presented in the *Logic*, remains one-sided. Hegel’s lectures on the history of philosophy show, however, that he knew Aristotle’s *Physics* well; so he would surely, or at least should, have known that, for Aristotle, one can divide a continuum at any point and doing so introduces *separateness* into the continuity of quantity.

In contrast to Hegel, Aristotle denies that one can divide a continuum into *points*, since he takes the latter to be utterly “indivisible” but insists that “everything continuous is divisible into divisibles”.⁵⁸ For Hegel, points can be the parts into which a continuum (such as space) is divisible, because they are both simple *and* internally continuous and divisible at the same time; but this is not true for Aristotle. Yet an Aristotelian point is, in Jonathan Lear’s phrase, “a permanent possibility of division” – the point *at* which (though not *into* which) a continuum can be divided.⁵⁹ When the continuum is then actually divided, its parts, Aristotle says, are “separate” (*kechorismena*) and in that sense discrete, even though they are further divisible.⁶⁰ A point, for Aristotle, is thus the permanent possibility of *discreteness* in the continuity of quantity, or, to use Hegel’s phrase, the “*real possibility* of the one” (SL 155 / LS 196). Accordingly, as Alfredo Ferrarin remarks, “the understanding of the ‘now’ and of the point as limits which negate or *make discrete* a continuity is a deep affinity between Hegel and Aristotle”.⁶¹

On the evidence of his account of continuity in the *Physics*, therefore, Aristotle is, indeed, the “speculative” thinker that Hegel praises in the *Logic* (even if there are still differences between the two).⁶² Yet when Hegel explains in the latter how Aristotle resolves Zeno’s paradoxes, he says only that Aristotle sets the idea of continuity (and its associated divisibility) “against” (*entgegen*) that of “infinite dividedness” (SL 164-5 / LS 208). He thus fails to do full justice to Aristotle’s position.

As Klaus Düsing remarks, Hegel also fails to remind us at this point in the *Logic* that Kant, too, stresses the continuity and divisibility of quantity (in the form of space).⁶³ Two pages earlier, when examining Kant’s presentation of the antithesis in the second antinomy, Hegel notes with approval that Kant himself takes space to be a “single” space, whose parts do not precede it and so are not its “*constituent parts*” (*Bestandteile*): as Hegel writes “continuity is quite rightly and unequivocally said of space here”, as opposed to the idea of “composition” (SL 163 / LS 206). Yet when Hegel gives Aristotle credit for emphasizing the continuity of quantity, he appears to forget that Kant also deserves credit in the same regard.

For Kant, both the thesis and antithesis in an antinomy go wrong by presupposing that the whole world of appearances is given to us as a thing in itself. This presupposition is an error for two reasons: first, no thing in itself can be given to us at all, and second, appearances can be given only in the *successive* synthesis of our intuitions and so cannot all be present at once as a totality. Nonetheless, when we have synthesized different sets of intuitions, limited wholes are thereby given to us; indeed, every determinate intuited *space* is such a whole (see CPR B 540-1, 551-3). Furthermore, Kant maintains, all the *parts* of such a limited whole must be given at the same time, since they are all contained in that whole. As spatial and so continuous, however, such a whole is

divisible into parts that are themselves continuous and further divisible, and so on without end. The whole is thus endlessly or “infinitely” divisible. This in turn means that within each whole an *infinity* of parts is given. Yet Kant insists that “though all the parts [*alle Teile*] are contained in the intuition of the whole, *the whole division* [*ganze Teilung*] is *not* contained in it”; that is to say, the parts are not given as *already divided* from one another (CPR B 552). They come to be given as divided only in the “regress” to them, that is, only as we actually divide the continuous whole *into* its parts. A continuous intuited whole in space can thus be divided “to infinity” (*ins Unendliche*), since there is an infinity of parts in the whole waiting to be distinguished; but the whole is not divided from the start into its parts and so cannot be said to “consist of” them.⁶⁴

Kant’s understanding of quantity in the form of space is thus similar to that attributed by Hegel to Aristotle in the *Logic*. Like Hegel’s Aristotle, Kant insists that continuous quantity is not already infinitely *divided*, but is merely infinitely *divisible*: in Kant’s own words, a body “as an extended whole” – that is, as spatial – “is divisible to infinity, without, however, therefore consisting of infinitely many parts” (CPR B 553).⁶⁵

Unlike the Aristotle we find in the *Physics*, however, Kant does not state explicitly that continuous space is divisible into “separate” – and in that sense, *discrete* – parts. A determinate space, for Kant, can certainly be divided, yet not into parts that are truly discrete, for space remains, throughout the process of its division, a “single” space. Indeed, from Kant’s perspective, it would be more accurate to say, not that a space can be divided *into parts*, but (as he puts it in the Transcendental Aesthetic) that such parts can be distinguished *in a space* – a space that remains irreducibly continuous (CPR B 39). This does not mean that Kant’s conception of space is *purely* one-sided: for the parts that can be distinguished in it are “relatively simple” compared to space as such (NF 296 [5726]).⁶⁶ Nonetheless, Kant’s conception of continuous space is more one-sided than that of Aristotle (and, indeed, than that of Hegel) (see 1: 360).

The views of Aristotle, Hegel and Kant could perhaps be put like this. For Aristotle, a continuous magnitude is divisible into separate, discrete parts that are continuous in themselves (and so further divisible), but that also form a continuity with one another insofar as “they join together at a common boundary”.⁶⁷ Similarly, for Hegel, quantity as such is divisible into simple, discrete units – in the case of space, into discrete, yet extended “heres” – but these units, once distinguished, form a continuity in their very discreteness. For Kant, however, space as “an infinite *given* magnitude” (CPR B 39) is divisible into parts that are not truly discrete at all, but only relatively simple, because it remains irreducibly continuous.⁶⁸

Grier notes, by the way, that Kant’s understanding of space is sometimes taken to coincide with that of the antithesis of the second antinomy.⁶⁹ The two cannot coincide, however, since the antithesis assumes that space as a whole is

given with all its parts, whereas, for Kant, space is merely the form of our intuition and only limited empirical “wholes” within space are given. Furthermore, the antithesis asserts the “complete division”, or actual dividedness, of space and matter into an infinity of (non-simple) parts, whereas, for Kant, space and matter are merely infinitely *divisible*.⁷⁰ Indeed, one could say that Kant is more opposed to the antithesis than to the thesis. Both go wrong in assuming that all the parts of things are given in their “complete division” from one another; the antithesis, however, seriously misrepresents the continuity of space, whereas the thesis, if taken to apply not to a “world” but only to “a whole made up of substances which is merely thought through the pure understanding”, *rightly* asserts that this whole must comprise simple parts (CPR B 469-70).

Kant provides an unambiguous statement of his own position on the division of space and spatial objects at the end of his remarks on the second antinomy:

For the infinity of the division [*Teilung*] of a given appearance in space is grounded solely on the fact that through this infinity merely its divisibility [*Teilbarkeit*], i.e. a multiplicity of parts, which is in itself absolutely indeterminate, is given, but the parts themselves are given and determined only through the subdivision [*Subdivision*] – in short, on the fact that the whole is not in itself already divided up.

—CPR B 554

Kant notes that an appearance in space is subject to such infinite divisibility insofar as it is a “continuous quantity” (*quantum continuum*), but he adds that an “organized” empirical whole can also be understood as a “discrete quantity” (*quantum discretum*) (CPR B 554-5). The latter, as its name implies, *is* composed of parts that are discrete and so already distinct from one another. Moreover, since these parts are already distinct, they must (in Kant’s view) form a determinate set or amount of units: “as soon as something is assumed as a discrete quantity, the amount [*Menge*] of units in it is determined; hence is always equal to a number [*Zahl*]” (CPR B 555). A discrete quantity as such cannot, therefore, be infinitely divisible: for a limit is set to its divisibility by the specific number of parts that it contains. This is not to deny that such a quantity is an appearance in space (not a “thing in itself”) and in that respect is a continuous, infinitely divisible magnitude; insofar as it is a discrete quantity, however, it is subject to limited division.

In his *Categories* Aristotle also distinguishes between continuous and discrete quantity,⁷¹ and, as we will see in volume 2, Hegel draws a related, but subtly different, distinction between continuous and discrete magnitude.⁷² At this stage in the *Logic*, however, no such distinctions have yet emerged. All we have before us is quantity as such, or quantity in its initial immediacy; and, though

such quantity is the unity of continuity *and* discreteness, it is the explicit *unity* of the two, and so is characterized above all by unity and continuity, rather than overt difference and discreteness (SL 154-5 / LS 195). This justifies taking space (and time) to exemplify quantity and considering Kant's second antinomy, as well as Zeno's paradoxes of motion, at this point in the *Logic*. It also justifies the claim that, for the moment at least, quantity is infinitely *divisible* into discrete units, but nothing more.

CONCLUSION

It is now time to return to Hegel's immanent development of the category of quantity and to discover – in volume 2 – how and why quantity gives rise, logically, to further forms of itself (including continuous and discrete magnitude). To conclude this volume, however, I shall briefly review Hegel's critique of Kant's antinomies. The arguments presented in this chapter and the last have been quite intricate and it would do no harm to summarize the main points.

First, Hegel disregards what interests Kant about the antinomies – namely, the conflict each one presents between judgements about the world – and focuses instead on the categories that he takes to be expressed in each thesis and antithesis. Second, he mistakenly claims that Kant's resolution of the antinomies simply shifts contradiction into the sphere of “appearance” and in that sense “make[s] the so-called conflict into something *subjective*”.⁷³ In these two respects, Hegel clearly does not do justice to Kant's own treatment of the antinomies.

Yet much in Hegel's interpretation and critique of Kant's treatment is justified. In my view, Hegel is right to contend that Kant's whole account of intuitions, categories and ideas, as well as his transcendental idealism, rests on *uncritical* assumptions about thought and being, and that his presentation and diagnosis of the antinomies should thus not simply be taken at face value. Hegel is also right to maintain that the thesis and antithesis of the second antinomy, as well as their proofs, give more or less explicit expression to distinct *categories* (in Hegel's sense), namely discreteness (or “simplicity”) and continuity (albeit confused with “composition”), as well as finitude and infinity. He is also right to maintain that the proofs, as presented by Kant, take for granted the very judgements they are supposed to prove and so consist ultimately in the mere assertion of those judgements and of the categories just mentioned.

Hegel is also right to maintain that Kant does not satisfactorily resolve the contradiction between and in such categories. So Kant does not understand continuity (as exemplified by space) and discreteness to form a speculative unity of opposites, as Hegel does, but rather keeps the two categories distinct. For Kant, as we have just seen, quantity can be continuous or discrete, but the continuity of space is not itself divisible into discrete parts. The parts that can

be distinguished *in* space are not truly discrete but only “relatively simple”; the point in space is simple – and in that sense “discrete” – but it is merely a limit in, not a part of, space; and simple, discrete *parts* belong only to things in themselves as they are conceived, in abstraction from space, by the pure understanding.⁷⁴ For Hegel, by contrast, the continuity of space is itself divisible into *discrete* parts, points or “heres” which in turn constitute a continuity (as well as being continuous and divisible within themselves). Continuity and discreteness are thus united in their opposition in space, as well as in quantity as such.

In my view, Kant also fails to resolve the contradiction between categories in another respect (which is implicit, not explicit, in Kant's account of the antinomies and to which Hegel himself does not draw attention). For Kant, a contradiction arises between the thesis and antithesis of an antinomy only when both are judged to apply to the same object – namely, the world – that has to be one thing *or* the other; and he dissolves the antinomy by arguing that no such “world” exists or is ever given to us. He insists, however, that the “world” is a necessary idea of reason and that it inevitably *seems* to be given. It would appear to follow, therefore, that the thesis and the antithesis must continue to apply to the world there seems to be, even when we know that there is in fact no such world. In that sense (which admittedly Hegel did not have in mind), Hegel is right to say that Kant leaves the antinomy “unresolved” for the knowing subject – only it remains unresolved in the sphere of illusion (*Schein*), rather than appearance (*Erscheinung*) (see 1: 339-40).

Be this last point as it may, Kant clearly does not undertake the kind of direct analysis of the categories that Hegel undertakes in the *Logic*, and so does not develop a properly speculative comprehension of quantity as such. Quite true, the Kantian will say: Kant does not do that, nor should he. Kant states explicitly in the first *Critique* that his aim is to show that (and how) categories are the conditions of the objects of experience, *not* to examine the categories directly and to provide a “definition” of them (see e.g. CPR B 108). Hegel's response to this, however, is that a truly *critical* philosophy that seeks to avoid dogmatism should examine the content, or logical structure, of the categories themselves – in a presuppositionless logic – and not just consider whether categories, as they are *assumed* to be, have subjective or objective validity. That is to say, the logical outcome of embracing Kant's critical project is to do precisely what Hegel does in his *Logic*.

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. EPM 74 / 104 [§ 401 A]. Miller translates “Fläche” as “surface”.
2. See EPM 147, 149, 151 / 206, 209, 211 [§§ 418 R, 420 R, 422 A].
3. See EL 85 / 119 [§ 42 A3], and SL 41 / LS 49: “*thought* [. . .] in the absolute sense”. See also 1: 22, 111.
4. See Houlgate (2016b), 68-9.
5. See Houlgate (2008), 101, and Houlgate (2016b), 57. A full account of such concrete “seeing” would also have to include discussion of the role played in it by empirical concepts.
6. See EL 24-5 / 42 [§ 2 and R], and SL 12 / LS 10.
7. See e.g. EL 57 / 82 [§ 24 A1].
8. In mature humans perception is always informed, more or less explicitly, by categories; but, in Hegel’s view, even sensations considered on their own have a distinctive *logical* form, namely that of singularity (*Einzelheit*); see EL 49-51 / 72, 74 [§20 R]. In that sense even the unconceptualized sensations of a baby owe their form to a category, as does everything in nature.
9. On the relation between grammar and categories, see Houlgate (1986), 142-3.
10. Hegel does not deny that, before they learn language, young children can see unidentified “things” that are a source of pleasure or pain. Yet they only come to experience identifiable *objects* as they learn language. See e.g. EPM 56-7 / 80 [§§ 396 A], and Houlgate (2016b), 57-8.
11. See also ILHP 105 / VGP 1: 160: “Difference in culture consists only in the difference of the thought determinations [*Gedankenbestimmungen*] brought into the consciousness of an age”.
12. Note that “polarity” is not treated as a separate category in the *Logic* but is mentioned briefly in a remark in the section on measure; see SL 317 / LS 408. See also EL 186-7 / 245-6 [§ 119 R and A1].

13. This does not mean that the structure of nature changes, but only that the categories change through which we comprehend nature (or that our conception of the categories changes). See Houlgate (2005a), 6-7.
14. See SL 89, 92, 126 / LS 110, 114, 158. Di Giovanni translates “Insichsein” and “Ansichsein” as “being-in-itself”, thereby obscuring the logical difference between them (see 1: 172). By contrast, Miller translates “Insichsein” as “being-within-self” (SLM 115).
15. On the similarity, but also difference, between Hegel and Heidegger in this respect, see Houlgate (2006), 105-6.
16. EL 59 / 85 [§ 24 A2].
17. EL 60 / 86 [§ 24 A2]. (Geraets et al. translate “alle Täuschung” as “all our illusions”.)
18. See EL 76 / 106 [§ 36 A], and LHP 3: 157-8 / VGP 4: 138-9.
19. See also SL 42 / LS 50. For further discussions of Hegel’s account of pre-Kantian metaphysics, see Houlgate (1986), 96-105, and Bowman (2013), 62-101.
20. EL 130, 132-3 / 175, 177-9 [§§ 81 A1, 82 A]. On Hegel’s conception of religion, see Houlgate (2005a), 249-54.
21. EL 76, 126 / 106, 169 [§§ 36 A, 80 A].
22. On the need to derive all thought-determinations “from thought itself” (*aus dem Denken selbst*), see EL 84 / 117 [§ 42 R]. In the logic of essence Hegel shows the necessity, but also the limits, of the principles of identity and non-contradiction (see SL 354 ff. / LW 24 ff.).
23. Wolff, C. (2005), 60-3 [§ 27]. See also FR 203 / GGA xvi: “a hitherto unknown kind of madness”.
24. EL 67 / 95 [§ 28 A]; see also SL 111 / LS 138.
25. Yet Plato also insists in the *Phaedo*, through Socrates, that “the opposite itself could never come to be opposite to itself”, and so in this sense he denies that opposites are essentially dialectical. See Plato (1993), 60 [103b], and 1: 148.
26. EL 131 / 176 [§ 82]; see also SL 35 / LS 41.
27. SL 13-14 / LS 12, and LHP 2: 260 / VGP 3: 97.
28. Spinoza (1994), 85-6 [*Ethics* ID3, ID6Exp.], emphasis added. The attributes of substance, for Spinoza, also lack negation and so differ immediately without limiting one another (Spinoza [1994], 85-6 [*Ethics* ID6 and Exp.]).
29. Spinoza (1994), 85 [*Ethics* ID2].
30. Spinoza (1995), 260 [Ep50]. Note that Hegel slightly misquotes Spinoza when he attributes to him the statement “*omnis determinatio est negatio*” (all determination is negation) (SL 87 / LS 107).
31. Spinoza (1994), 115-16, 159 [*Ethics* IID2, IIP4Dem.], emphasis added. See also Houlgate (2006), 43-4.
32. See Spinoza (1994), 85 [*Ethics* ID1].
33. In Hegel’s view, Leibniz’s own thought “proceeds from the limited determinations of the understanding regarding absolute multiplicity” (LHP 3: 154 / VGP 4: 136). Yet Hegel also praises Leibniz’s thought that “all multiplicity is enclosed in unity” (VGPW 3: 243). One can describe this latter thought as “speculative”, though Hegel does not do so explicitly.
34. Like all pre-Kantian rationalist metaphysicians, however, Wolff, in Hegel’s view, maintains that “thought-determinations” are the “*fundamental determinations of*

- things*” and in that sense he, too, can be considered a “speculative” thinker (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28]). See also 1: 115.
35. See EL 76-80 / 106-12 [§§ 37-9].
 36. Geraets et al. have “fundamental illusion” for “Grundtäuschung”.
 37. Locke (1975), 119 [II, ii, § 1] (emphasis added to “at the same time”).
 38. Geraets et al. have only “it has been observed”, instead of “it has been observed correctly”. The German is “die richtige Reflexion”.
 39. Locke (1975), 118 [II, i, §§ 24-5]. Hume does not deny that we can make causal judgements, but he is more conscious than Locke that they are not warranted by our sensuous experience; see Hume (1955), 84-9 [VII ii].
 40. Hume (1955), 40-1, 171-3 [IV i, XII iii].
 41. See EL 131 / 176 [§ 82].
 42. On the uncritical standpoint of Hegel’s critics, see also EL 6-7 / 17 [Preface to 2nd edn]; Burbidge (1981), 201, and Houlgate (2006), 37-40.
 43. See Houlgate (2006), 24-8, 67-9.
 44. See also LL 63 / 73: “Descartes, the philosopher who once again introduced genuine free philosophizing into the European world”.
 45. See Descartes (1984-91), 1: 208 [§ 48].
 46. Descartes (1984-91), 2: 28.
 47. See LL 63 / 73, and Descartes (1984-91), 2: 19. The so-called “cogito” argument is given the familiar form “I think, therefore I am” only in the *Discourse on the Method* (1637) and the *Principles* (1: 127, 195-6 [§§ 7, 10]). In the *Meditations* Descartes writes: “*I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind” (2: 17). The argument is, however, the same in each case. – On Hegel’s own version of the argument “thinking, therefore ‘is’”, see 1: 107-9.
 48. See EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R]; Houlgate (2006), 29-53, and Martin (2012), 2-3.
 49. The judgement is shown *not* to be adequate to the expression of truth early in the *Logic*, since it is unable to express the “movement” of becoming (SL 67 / LS 82). Judgement is not considered in its own right, however, until the logic of the concept; see SL 550 ff. / LB 58 ff., and Trisokkas (2012). On the relation between the judgement and the speculative sentence, see Houlgate (1986), 141-66.
 50. As we shall see (1: 91-4), however, the thought that the beginning contains all the categories implicitly (*an sich*) is itself a thought we can have only at the *end* of speculative logic. At the start all we have is the indeterminate being of thought, indeed indeterminate being *tout court*.
 51. Popper (1966), 2: 28, 39.
 52. Throughout this study I have discussed, or made reference to, numerous secondary works on Hegel, but there are others I have left out of consideration because they are not directly relevant to my task or do not, in my view, help us greatly to understand Hegel (or, of course, because they are unknown to me). Two recent books on the *Logic* by Stanley Rosen (Rosen [2014]) and Rocío Zambrana (Zambrana [2015]) have not been discussed here because I have reviewed them elsewhere (see Houlgate [2016c], and Houlgate [2017a]); and Pirmin Stekeler’s “dialogical” commentary on the “doctrine of being” (Stekeler [2020]) was published after this study was largely completed, and so could not be considered for that reason. I have also not considered Mehmet Tabak’s book on the doctrine of being (Tabak [2017]). This is partly because

it only recently came to my attention, but more importantly because it seems to me not to shed light on Hegel's arguments. Tabak recognizes that Hegel intends speculative logic to be presuppositionless (3-4), but he follows Feuerbach, Schelling and others in maintaining that such logic, as Hegel presents it, is in fact shot through with presuppositions (see e.g. 19, 43, 45, 132, 141, 195, 211). It is, of course, perfectly legitimate to direct this criticism against Hegel, but one would expect it to be supported by careful and detailed examination of Hegel's arguments. Unfortunately, this is not what we find in Tabak's book: his criticisms of Hegel are all too often based on dogmatic assertions or on misunderstandings of Hegel's arguments (such as, for example, the claim that "Hegel's conception of something is [. . .] indistinguishable from his conception of quality" [55; see, by contrast, SL 88-9 / LS 109-10]). More detailed consideration of Tabak's claims will have to wait for another occasion. In the meantime, the arguments in this study may be regarded as containing my responses to those claims.

Chapter 2

1. A shortened version of this chapter was published as Houlgate (2015).
2. See vol. 1, chapters 15 and 16, and vol. 2, chapter 8.
3. Categories are "objectively valid", for Kant, when they yield cognition of an object, not just the bare thought of one (see e.g. CPR A 242, B 298).
4. See also SL 27 / LS 30, and EL 81 / 113 [§§ 41].
5. The charge that Kant retains a traditional conception of the categories (in the narrow sense) finds confirmation in his conception of "substance". In its unschematized form, Kant maintains, "substance would signify nothing more than a something that can be thought as a subject (without being a predicate of something else)" (CPR B 186; see B 129). This definition, however, differs only slightly from that given by Aristotle (in the *Categories*), for whom "a primary substance is neither said of a subject nor in a subject" (Aristotle [1984], 1: 6 [3a8-9]).
6. See CPR B 3-4.
7. See CPR B 135: "I am therefore conscious of the identical self in regard to the manifold of the representations [. . .]". — It should be noted that for Hegel's Kant — and for Kant himself — space and time are continuous, so sensuous intuitions form a continuous manifold. Such continuity, however, falls short of the explicit unity and "combination" that is supplied by understanding. See 1: 357-8, and CPR B 129-30: "Yet the combination (*conjunctio*) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition".
8. Di Giovanni translates "*Gegenstände*" as "*intended objects*".
9. See Ameriks (2000), 280-5.
10. See also CPR B 197, and Pippin (1989), 27.
11. See EL 51 / 74 [§ 20 R], and SL 690-1 / LB 229-30.
12. See CPR B 131-5. As Allison points out, this does not mean that, for Kant, "the *I think* must be able to accompany all my representations *tout court*", but that "it must be able to do so, *if* they are to function cognitively for me as representations". It is possible, therefore, for us to have representations that are, and remain,

- unconscious and so are nothing to us “cognitively speaking”. See Allison (2004), 163-4.
13. See Spinoza (1994), 100 [*Ethics* IP18].
 14. See VGPW 3: 343, and CPR B 75, 297-8, 303.
 15. For, Kant, most causes in nature are “simultaneous with their effects”, but in “the order of time” the effect follows the cause “even if no time has elapsed” between them (CPR B 248-9).
 16. As we will see (1: 33), Kant thinks that categories can be used to *think* of things in themselves, though this does not yield any knowledge of them. See e.g. CPR B 146: “To *think* of an object and to *cognize* an object are thus not the same”.
 17. See CPR B 93, 322-3, and Allison (2004), 12-13.
 18. SL 389-97 / LW 68-78. See also CPR B 322-3 (on form and matter).
 19. Though the development of such logic leads to further criticisms of Kant, especially of his antinomies; see, for example, SL 157 ff. / LS 198 ff., and vol. 1, chapters 15 and 16. Hegel also criticises Kant in his lectures on the history of philosophy; see LHP 3: 170-8 / VGP 4: 149-56.
 20. Note that Hegel sees a direct connection between the two respects in which Kant’s categories are limited. For him, such categories are “unities merely of subjective consciousness” and *for that reason* are “conditioned by the given material” and so “empty” in themselves (EL 86 / 119-20 [§ 43]).
 21. On vision, see Houlgate (2016b), 58.
 22. See CPR B 4, 38-40; VGPW 3: 339-40, and Sedgwick (2012), 75: “necessary and universal constraints”.
 23. But see also CPR B 72: “it may well be that all finite thinking beings must necessarily agree with human beings in this regard (though we cannot decide this)”.
 24. See also EN 28-40 / 41-55 [§§ 254-9].
 25. The a priori forms of intuition, space and time, are universal and necessary, but intuition itself does not entail any consciousness of necessity. It simply registers things as being immediately given (CPR B 33): as being *here* or occurring *now*. When, however, something is understood, through a category, to be an object, it is understood to be what anyone in this circumstance *must* encounter; see CPR A 104: “our thought of the relation of all cognition to its object carries something of necessity with it”. – Note that, although Kant distinguishes between the contributions of intuition and the categories to cognition, like Hegel he does not think that we are conscious of uncategorized intuitions. See CPR A 98-110; Houlgate (2016b), 66, and 1: 3-4.
 26. “what conforms to thought” translates “das Gedankenmäßige”.
 27. See also Allison (2004), 12: “the relativization of the *concept* of an object to human cognition”.
 28. Kant states that “what we call outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility” (CPR B 45, 521).
 29. Sedgwick (2012), 71.
 30. Though, Kant argues, it is incomprehensible how we could even have a posteriori, empirical knowledge of a thing in itself, “since its properties cannot migrate over into my power of representation” (P 78 / 34 [§ 9]). See also Allison (2004), 37.

31. Paul Guyer argues, by contrast, that “transcendental idealism applies to the categories only because of the transcendental idealism of the forms of intuition to which they must be applied” (Guyer [1993], 189).
32. Allison (1983), 27, emphasis added.
33. For similar arguments, see Guyer (1987), 338, and Allais (2015), 82.
34. Note that, *pace* Ameriks, Hegel’s charge against Kant is not just that he is a subjectivist (despite his good ideas about objectivity). It is also that he assumes there to be a sharp distinction, indeed opposition, *between* what is subjective and what is objective. See Ameriks (2015), 43-4.
35. Strictly speaking, “quantity”, for Kant, is not itself a category, but the name of a “class” of category (see CPR B 110). For the purposes of this discussion, however, I treat both it and “quality” as Kantian categories, as Hegel does.
36. This is Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” without the thought of the ‘I’: the bare thought of thought’s bare being. See Descartes (1984-91), 1: 127, 195-6 [§§ 7, 10].
37. See Houlgate (2006), 129-31, 331-47.
38. EL 66 / 94 [§28]: “daß das, was *ist*, damit daß es *gedacht* wird, *an sich* erkannt werde”. As Hegel notes in the *Logic*, the *Phenomenology* leads to this conclusion too; see SL 28-9, 38-9 / LS 32-3, 45-6.
39. See Houlgate (2016b), 59-66.
40. See also EL 87 / 120-1 [§ 44 R].
41. See also SL 41 / LS 49.
42. Allison (2004), xv, 4, 11.
43. Allison (2004), 56; see also 53-4.
44. On the distinction between “appearance” and “phenomenon” for Kant, see Allison (2004), 57-8. – In this discussion I follow Allison in taking the distinction between appearances and things in themselves to hold principally between two ways of considering the *same* things, rather than between “two ontologically distinct sets of entities” (Allison [2004], 3, 16, 62; see also CPR B xviii n., xxvii: “*twofold meaning*”). By contrast, Hegel appears to adopt the “two-world” reading of Kant’s distinction when he suggests that, for Kant, the “*kind of objects*” in each case is different (SL 26 / LS 29). Yet Hegel is also reported to take Kant’s distinction to be between the things that are “only appearances for *us*” and “their *in itself*” (*das Ansich derselben*) (EL 88 / 122 [§ 45 A]), which might indicate that he interprets it in line with the “two-aspect” reading. – Allison recognizes, by the way, that “Kant regards God and rational souls as non-sensible (intelligible) beings ontologically distinct from the sensible objects of human experience”, but he insists that otherwise Kant’s transcendental distinction holds between “two ways of considering one and the same thing” (Allison [2004], 51, 55).
45. Allison points out, however, that the thing in itself cannot be identified with the transcendental object, insofar as the latter is understood, not as the “cause” of appearance, but as “that which in all of our empirical concepts in general can provide relation to an object”, and thus as the “correlate of the unity of apperception” (see CPR A 109, 250, and Allison [2004], 61).
46. See Ameriks (2000), 297-8, and Allison (2004), 56, 72-3.
47. See CPR B xxvi, and Guyer (1993), 177-8.

48. On CPR B 344 Kant writes that it “remains completely unknown whether such an object is to be encountered within or without us”. Nevertheless, insofar as it is, indeed, an *unknown* object it must still be distinguished from our thinking of it.
49. Also correct, in my view, is Hegel’s *logical* critique of Kant’s distinction between the thing in itself and appearance – a critique based on the inseparability of “being in itself” and being “other-related” (see SL 93-4 / LS 116-17, and 1: 190-1). – There is another important aspect to Hegel’s critique of Kant’s concept of the thing in itself, which, however, I do not consider in this study. This involves maintaining, not that what Kant (allegedly) regards as an indisputable *being* just out of reach is actually a product of abstract thought, but that in formulating his concept Kant “does not actually abstract enough from the way we ordinarily conceive of things” (Houlgate [2006], 133) (see also McCumber [2014], 53). This criticism obviously rests on Hegel’s view that speculative philosophy should completely abstract from the idea that thought relates to *objects* and begin with indeterminate being.
50. See EL 98-9 / 135-6 [§ 51 and R], and VGPW 3: 359-60.
51. See Guyer (2000), 42.
52. Note that, even in this case, what is thought through the “is” of the copula is not the *immediacy* of being – of the here and the now – but the *objective* being of what we perceive: the fact that this body *is* heavy *objectively*. See CPR B 142, and 1: 117.
53. This is true, for Kant, even in the case of pure (as opposed to empirical) self-consciousness. “In the synthetic original unity of apperception”, Kant writes, “I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only *that* I am” (CPR 157). The thought “*that* I am”, however, is not itself the direct intuition of my being or existence: “this *representation* is a *thinking*, not an *intuiting*”. The explicit “I think” (or “*analytical* unity of apperception”) is, indeed, inseparable from the consciousness of my existence; yet, *pace* Descartes, that consciousness is contained, not in the thought of the “I” itself, but in an accompanying “indeterminate empirical intuition”. The “existential proposition” “I exist”, which goes hand in hand with the thought “I think”, is thus grounded in “sensation” which “belongs to sensibility” (CPR B 133, 422-3).
54. As we will see (1: 320-1), reason, in Kant’s view, produces “ideas”, each of which is the thought of its object *as* given, *as* actually existing. Yet no object is actually given through the ideas, and in that sense they are merely thoughts of the *possibility* of their objects.
55. See Allison (2004), 12-15, and Guyer (2000), 51-3.
56. See Houlgate (2006), 17-18, and McCumber (2014), 62: “an intuitive understanding, if it exists, is God’s, not ours”.
57. The discursive character of thought then in turn requires human intuition to be exclusively *sensuous*.
58. Kant is actually referring here to the understanding acting as imagination; but see also CPR B 74-5.
59. This is not to deny that the doctrine of incongruent counterparts may also underpin this distinction; see P 81-2 / 38-9 [§ 13]. Yet this doctrine itself reflects the *logical* distinction, conceived by the understanding, between the structures of pure intuition and understanding; see CPR B 39-40.

60. Indeed, understanding also distinguishes the pure form of sensibility from the empirical “matter” of appearance; see CPR B 34-6.
61. See Allison (2004), xvi. The sharp distinction between humanity and God is one that Spinoza, for example, would not accept (without significant qualification); see Houlgate (2006), 17-18, and Spinoza (1994), 260 [*Ethics* VP36]: “The mind’s intellectual love of God is the very love of God by which God loves himself”. – Kant states that the “two stems of human cognition”, namely sensibility and understanding, “may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root” (B 29). It is, however, *understanding* that distinguishes between the two “stems”: we cannot sensuously *intuit* the difference between them, but we have to *understand* it.
62. As we shall see (1: 315-16), Kant later subordinates understanding to reason; but this does not lead him to challenge the fundamental distinctions of the understanding.
63. Note that, strictly speaking, “being” for Kant is not a concept but rather the “positing of a thing” (see CPR B 626). But it is still sharply distinguished by thought from thought.
64. See SL 24-5 / LS 27-8, and EL 65-6, 81, 98 / 93-4, 113, 135 [§§ 26-8, 41, 51].
65. By “object” and “thing” Hegel means here the thing in itself, not the object of experience which, of course, in Kant’s view, is structured by the categories.
66. See CPR B 300, 347, 605, 608; SL 85-6 / LS 106-7, and EL 94 / 130 [§ 49]. See also 1: 12 (on Spinoza’s conception of God), and 1: 167.
67. For Hegel, by contrast, “the transition of this quality” – straightness, which he equates with “simplicity” – “to the quantitative determination (‘the shortest’) that allegedly constitutes the synthetic factor is in fact entirely analytic” (SL 174 / LS 220-1).
68. See SL 157 ff. / LS 198 ff.; EL 91-2 / 126 [§ 48 and R], and CPR B 432 ff.
69. See vol. 1, chapters 15 and 16, and vol. 2, chapter 8.
70. See EL 89 / 123-4 [§ 46 R], and SL 157 / LS 198.
71. On Kant’s insight elsewhere into the unity of opposites; see e.g. SL 174-5 / LS 221, and 1: 44-5.
72. See EL 66, 84 / 94, 116-17 [§§ 28 R, 42 R]. Hegel would, therefore, accept Guyer’s assertion that Kant’s “list of categories was systematically developed from the insight that all knowledge-claims must take the form of judgments” – provided that we replace the word “insight” with “assumption”. See Guyer (1993), 186.
73. Note that, for Kant, hypothetical and disjunctive judgements are relations between judgements, rather than concepts; see CPR B 98-9, 141.
74. The thought of this bare “something” is the thought of the “transcendental object”, but conceived as the “object to which I relate appearance in general”, rather than as the intelligible “cause of appearance” (CPR A 103-4, 109, 253, B 344). See Longuenesse (2007), 21: “categories are more than mere logical functions, they are concepts of an object”.
75. See Houlgate (2006), 16 ff.
76. See EL 81-4 / 113-17 [§§ 41, 42 and R].
77. See EL 84 / 117 [§ 42 R].
78. Note that, *pace* Guyer, Hegel’s claim is not that “only a derivation of all the categories from some *single concept* could justify a claim to necessity” (Guyer

- [1993], 187, emphasis added). It is that only a derivation of all the categories from an *utterly indeterminate starting point* could justify a claim to necessity.
79. A category as such, for Kant, is the thought of the synthetic unity of manifold intuitions, but as a *concept* it is also an analytic unity that subsumes other representations under it.
 80. In Hegel's view, understanding subsumes representations "under" concepts, but a concept, as reason conceives it, particularizes and individuates, and thereby determines, *itself*. The universal "animal", for example, individuates itself as *this* animal. See SL 529-49 / LB 32-57; EL 56 / 82 [§ 24 A 1]; Houlgate (2005b), 24-7, and Winfield (2012), 217-21. Concepts, for Hegel, are thus not merely "general" representations, without the singularity of intuition, as they are for Kant; see Guyer (2000), 40-1, 51.
 81. See also Houlgate (2006), 16-18, where I argue that Kant's thought that understanding is minimally judgement is built into his assumption that (finite) understanding is discursive, and that this assumption in turn coincides with Kant's assumption that finite human beings are quite distinct from God, who alone would be capable of intellectual intuition. This latter assumption is qualified by Spinoza (see this chapter, note 61).
 82. EL 81-2 / 114 [§ 41 A1], and SL 40 / LS 48.
 83. SL 21 / LS 22, and EL 7 / 18 [Preface to 2nd edn].
 84. See e.g. EL 81 / 113 [§ 41].
 85. Sedgwick (2012), 143.
 86. In Kant's view, the principles that directly govern intuitions and appearances are, in fact, principles of pure understanding, rather than reason (see CPR B 187 ff.). For an account of two principles that Kant assigns specifically to reason, see 1: 317-19.
 87. Fichte (1994), 27.
 88. See EL 108 / 147 [§ 60 A2].
 89. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel insists that basing thought on "presuppositions and assurances" is "inadmissible", yet he points to the "difficulty" that the beginning of thought "as something *immediate* [*als ein Unmittelbares*] does make a presupposition or, rather, is itself just that" (EL 24 / 41 [§ 1]). In the *Logic*, however, it becomes clear that this difficulty can be avoided, if at the start of thought no presupposition whatsoever is made and we begin with sheer immediacy that is conceived, not as "immediacy", but as utterly indeterminate *being* (SL 47-8 / LS 58-9). – Note, by the way, that in another sense the indeterminate starting point of speculative logic can be "proven", since (as I have just argued) it can be shown to be made necessary by the modern demand that thought be radically self-critical and free. It can also be shown to be the necessary outcome of phenomenology. See vol. 1, chapters 3, 4 and 5.
 90. Although Kant's antinomies, as Hegel interprets them, provide a reason for reconsidering the content of the categories of understanding, they do not lead directly to the thought that such reconsideration should be presuppositionless. I have thus left them off the list at the start of this paragraph.
 91. Ameriks (2000), 286.
 92. See also Houlgate (2006), 129-31.

93. See Houlgate (2006), 161-2, and Houlgate (2013), 12-13, 185-9.
94. EL 84 / 117 [§ 42 R], and Houlgate (2006), 136. To Hegelian eyes, Kant's thought is thus by no means as "modest" as Ameriks, for example, would have us believe; see Ameriks (2000), 268, 286. For Hegel on "true modesty" in thinking, see LL 14 / 18.
95. See also SL 54-5, 738 / LS 67-8, LB 288, and Houlgate (2006), 125-8. Note that, for Kant, an intellectual intuition would be one "through whose representations the *objects* would themselves at the same time be given, or produced" (CPR B 145, emphasis added). For Hegel, however, speculative logic begins only with the intuition of pure *being* – being that is neither "something" nor an "object", but utterly indeterminate.
96. See EL 102 / 140 [§ 55 R].

Chapter 3

1. On Kant's conception of "objective validity", see this volume, chapter 2, note 3.
2. Strictly speaking, not every category turns directly *into* its opposite, but some – such as being-in-itself and being-for-other – form a unity for other reasons (see SL 92-3 / LS 115-16, and 1: 190). Such categories, however, still undermine their own one-sidedness and in that sense are dialectical.
3. This is not to deny that speculative philosophy has hermeneutic and historical presuppositions; but it begins from no *systematic* presuppositions that would predetermine the course of its development, and in that sense it is presuppositionless. See Houlgate (2006), 54-71, and 1: 101-7.
4. Pippin (1989), 6, 8, 21, 176.
5. Pippin (1989), 32, 39, 41.
6. Pippin (1989), 39.
7. See Houlgate (2006), 38-9.
8. See Houlgate (2006), 29-30, 54-7, 72-4, and Kolb (2010), 55.
9. See Houlgate (2006), 58, and Koch (2000), 140: "a thought experiment with an open outcome".
10. Popper (1966), 2: 39.
11. See EL 35, 45 / 54-5, 67 [§§ 11, 19 and R].
12. See SL 28, 46-7 / LS 32, 57.
13. What we might call the *concrete* "element" of speculative logic is the explicit unity of thought *and* being (see SL 39 / LS 46, and 1: 119).
14. On the possibility of beginning with *nothing* (rather than being), see 1: 143.
15. As we shall see (1: 130), whereas the *explicit* subject-matter of Hegel's logic at the start is just pure being, not our reflection – which is nonetheless true – that this is the *thought* or category of being, for Pippin logic at the start is about this thought *as a thought*.
16. Winfield (2012), 31-2.
17. This does not mean that we cannot use familiar categories and words to think of thought *as* pure being (see SL 59 / LS 71). Such categories and words, however, must bring to mind being in its sheer indeterminacy (and not invest it surreptitiously with determinacy). For a discussion of how this can be done, see Houlgate (2006), 79-88.

18. VGPW 3: 127, and Descartes (1984-91), 2: 16. For the Latin text of Descartes' *Meditations*, see Descartes (1979).
19. See e.g. LHP 3: 109 / VGP 4: 93.
20. See SL 122 / LS 154-5: "Being is indeed the indeterminate, but it is not immediately expressed in it that it is the opposite of the determinate". – Heidegger appears not to understand the point made in the last pages, since, in his view, Hegel's "being" is precisely the "un-determined and un-mediated" (and only for that reason is equated by Hegel with "nothing") (Heidegger [2015], 15). See this volume, chapter 6, note 9.
21. Di Giovanni omits two lines of the German text in his translation. His version moves straight from "something simple" to "for it is only in the immediate". Miller translates the whole passage; see SLM 78.
22. In this respect, Hegel's thought is closer to that of the later Schelling than Schelling himself recognizes; see Houlgate (1999), 109-10.
23. See also SL 51 / LS 63.
24. See SL 466 / LW 162.
25. Beiser (2005), 60.

Chapter 4

1. Di Giovanni omits part of Hegel's sentence and merely has "setting aside every reflection". Miller provides a fuller translation; see SLM 69.
2. Hegel clearly means that the advance is a further determination *of the beginning*, that is, of pure being. Di Giovanni, however, writes that the advance is only "one more determination of the *same advance*" (emphasis added). Miller gets Hegel right here; see SLM 71.
3. See also Houlgate (2006), 61.
4. This is the equivalent in speculative logic of "simply looking on" (*das reine Zusehen*) in Hegelian phenomenology; see PS 54 / 65.
5. See Brandom (2002), 12: "the force of the better reason".
6. Descartes (1984-91), 2: 46.
7. See also SL 737 / LB 286: "the method proper to each subject matter [*Sache*]", and Houlgate (2006), 33-5. (Di Giovanni translates "Sache" as "fact".)
8. See SL 36 / LS 42: "the method dwelling in the dialectic".
9. See PS 3 / 5, where Hegel states that philosophy requires one to "surrender oneself" to the subject-matter and "lose oneself in it".
10. Hegel writes "immanent development of the concept", but that is a retrospective way of putting it, since being only proves to be "concept" once it has developed through the various forms of being and essence; see SL 529 ff. / LB 32 ff.
11. Note that we have a consciousness of the method of immanence – of "the inner self-movement of the content of logic" – *as we proceed*, and long before we reach the end of the *Logic*. What emerges at the end is a consciousness of the method of the content conceived as absolute *Idea* (see SL 736 ff. / LB 285 ff.). It is this latter consciousness that Nuzzo calls "*methodological*" (Nuzzo [2011], 112).
12. In the case of Spinoza, the conception of God or substance from which philosophy begins is not just a metaphysical "representation", but is, in part, a speculative

- conception (see 1: 12 on “*causa sui*”). Yet, insofar as it is merely assumed, it remains subject – more or less – to the problems described in the following paragraphs.
13. See also Houlgate (1986), 102-3. The problem besetting metaphysical judgement is not quite so acute in ordinary, empirical judgement, since in that case the subject of the judgement is a determinate empirical thing (or event). Nonetheless, even in this case the subject is rendered *fully* determinate only by the predicate of the judgement.
 14. On the difference between a judgement and a proposition, see SL 552-3 / LB 61. Hegel claims here that a judgement subsumes something singular under a universal, whereas a proposition connects two singular elements (e.g. Aristotle and the date of his death) and so requires no logical subsumption.
 15. In this sense, a truly philosophical relation to truth is similar to a truly religious one; see Houlgate (2005a), 41, and Houlgate (2006), 70-1.
 16. Miller translates “Begriff” as “Notion”.
 17. Leibniz (1998), 268 [§ 1].
 18. On Hegel’s conception of the speculative sentence, see Houlgate (1986), 141-53, and Houlgate (2006), 93-8.
 19. This tension, generated by the *form* of the judgement, is similar to that found in metaphysical judgements. In the latter, however, there is the added problem that the subject is merely a metaphysical “representation” (rather than a properly derived concept, or something empirical), and so does not provide the firm ground for predication that it appears to provide (see 1: 65-6, and note 13 in this chapter).
 20. One could, however, regard this sentence as an extended speculative one, since it presents *Dasein* as a complex process of development. – Note that Di Giovanni translates “*Dasein*” as “existence”.
 21. In another context Hegel makes it clear that in matters of language he is not a purist, and I suggest that his attitude to speculative sentences is not one of “affected purism” either (SL 13 / LS 11).
 22. Di Giovanni translates “*Recht*” as “privilege”, rather than “right”. The usual German word for “privilege”, however, is “*Vorrecht*”.
 23. See SL 746-7 / LB 298: the syllogism “in its formalism” “lacks the essential *dialectical* moment of *negativity*”. See also 2: 60-1.
 24. See e.g. EPM 16 / 27 [§ 382 A].
 25. See Houlgate (2006), 81-2.
 26. The crucial comma before “to its content” is missing in both the di Giovanni and Miller translations (see SLM 110).
 27. See e.g. McTaggart (1910), 26: “The subtlety of the distinctions [. . .]”.
 28. HMP 141 / AS 4: 551, and Popper (1966), 2: 28.
 29. Burbidge (1990), 171.
 30. See also SL 10 / LS 6.
 31. See EL 67 / 95 [§ 28 A], and 1: 10.
 32. Solomon (1999), 86.
 33. See also PS 34 / 42: “So *understanding* [*Verständigkeit*], too, is a becoming, and, as this becoming, it is *rationality* [*Vernünftigkeit*]”.
 34. Burbidge (1990), 172.
 35. Burbidge (1981), 52-3, 64.
 36. Burbidge (1981), 43.

37. Burbidge (1981), 40, emphasis added.
38. Burbidge (1981), 46. Dialectic, for Burbidge, thus appears to have a twofold character. On the one hand, it is “the inevitable movement of thought” from one category to another – a movement that just “happens” to thought (40, 197). On the other hand, it is deliberate “intellectual activity” that “asks understanding to clarify its terms” (43).
39. Pippin (1989), 182.
40. Burbidge (1981), 39, emphasis added.
41. Burbidge (1981), 38-9.
42. Note that this activity of keeping our opinions and assumptions at bay is different from the activity, described by Burbidge, of “isolating” categories from other categories. The former activity aims to keep extraneous assumptions out of logic, whereas the latter activity, for Burbidge, belongs to logic itself and helps drive it forward.
43. On Hegel’s rejection of external criticism of speculative logic, see Houlgate (2006), 35 ff.
44. See 1: 98, and note 62 in this chapter.
45. See EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R]: “the freedom that abstracts from everything”. – As we will see, however, an act of abstraction is required at the end of phenomenology, too, in order to get us to the beginning of logic (see 1: 125-7).
46. See SL 478 ff. / LW 176 ff., and PR 38, 47-9 / 50, 65-7 [§§ 5 R, 14-15].
47. See vol. 1, chapter 8, notes 10, 16.
48. Brandom (2009), 2-3.
49. My account is indebted to the important treatment of this topic by Nuzzo (2011), though I focus on slightly different issues and do not agree with everything she says. For Nuzzo’s more extended discussion of method in Hegel’s *Logic*, see Nuzzo (2018), especially (but not only) 3-72.
50. The Idea takes the form of life, the Idea of cognition, as well as the absolute Idea. In this section, however, I treat the terms “Idea” and “absolute Idea” as synonymous.
51. EL 307 / 392 [§ 243]. On the difference between the concept and Idea, see e.g. SL 673 / LB 208-9, and EL 286 / 367 [§ 213].
52. See Nuzzo (2011), 120-1, 123. Since Hegel takes what is universal to be the “concept”, he equates the *method* of the Idea, as opposed to the whole process and content of the Idea, with “the movement of the *concept*” (SL 737 / LB 286). This method, however, is not simply the “*concept as such*” that is thematized at the start of the subjective logic. The method, conceived at the end of speculative logic, is the concept or method of its whole development, that is, the concept or method *of the Idea*. – Hegel also states that such method is the “*self-knowing concept*” (SL 737 / LB 286). This method is thus not only the form of the Idea, but it is also conscious of itself as such (in and through our consciousness of it). This moment of consciousness in method is given particular emphasis by Nuzzo (see e.g. [2011], 116, 120-3).
53. See SL 738-48 / LB 287-300, and Nuzzo (2011), 123.
54. Nuzzo (2011), 119-20, 125. See also Nuzzo (2018), 113 ff. on the “two perspectives on the movement of the logic”.
55. On the retrospective reconceiving of pure being as determinate indeterminacy, see 1: 56.

56. In this passage Hegel is actually considering how the indeterminate beginning is redefined in relation to (and so retrospectively mediated by) any “determinacy” that emerges from it, not just in relation to the Idea. See also SL 749 / LB 301: “the *determinacy* that the method generates [. . .]”.
57. EL 303, 305 / 388, 390 [§§ 236, 238]. See also SL 735 / LB 284.
58. See SL 49 / LS 61: “the line of scientific forward movement consequently turns *into a circle*”. See also Houlgate (2006), 50, 59.
59. EPM 9 / 17 [§ 381]; see also EN 19 / 30 [§ 248 A]: “Nature is the first in time, but the absolute *prius* is the Idea; this absolute *prius* is the last, the true beginning”.
60. See Houlgate (2005a), 107.
61. Pure being is “universality” only in retrospect, from the perspective of the concept.
62. Nuzzo emphasises that the development from being to the Idea must be purely immanent, but she notes that Hegel’s *presentation* of that development also involves the methodological perspective attained at the end of it (Nuzzo [2011], 114, 128). The apparently external reflections, made by Hegel in the course of the *Logic*, are thus not always merely external, but in some cases constitute “the ‘reflection’ proper to ‘absolute method’” (that is, to the method of the Idea). As such, they arise from the fact that, in presenting the immanent development of logic, Hegel already regards it *as* the development of the Idea (125; see also 113-15).
63. White (1983), 57, emphasis added.
64. Hegel writes, just before the start of logic, that “there *is* nothing in heaven or nature or spirit or anywhere else that does not contain just as much immediacy as mediation” (SL 46 / LS 56). At the start, the beginning is *mediated*, insofar as it is made necessary by modern freedom (and, as we shall see, by the *Phenomenology*). Yet, *as* the beginning, it must be pure *immediate* being. The mediation of the beginning does not, therefore, undermine its immediacy, but rather makes it necessary. At the end of logic, the beginning is reconceived as mediated in the ways we have described. Yet that reconception, which knows itself to come second, also requires logic to begin with pure *immediate* being. Once again, therefore, the mediation of the beginning requires the latter to be purely immediate.

Chapter 5

1. See Winfield (1989), 63, 87-8, and Houlgate (2006), 78.
2. The “double perspective” that I have in mind here, and have highlighted elsewhere (see Houlgate [2006], 83-4), is similar to, but subtly different from, the one described by Anton Friedrich Koch. For Koch, we (and Hegel) set out a “background theory” – in the *science* of logic – that has as its object “pure thinking” that is presuppositionless. Our thought, however, does not aim to be “pure and presuppositionless” itself. For pure thinking, or what Koch calls the “foreground logic”, pure being is utterly indeterminate and immediate; for our “background logic”, on the other hand, pure being is *determined as* “indeterminate” and “immediate”, and is understood to be the mediated result of abstraction (see Koch [2000], 140-1, and Koch [2018], 48-9). In my view, by contrast, *our* thinking must itself become pure and presuppositionless. It does so by (a) employing familiar words and concepts to bring to mind pure categories, including pure being, and (b) at the same time keeping those pure

- categories themselves *free* of all familiar, presupposed connotations. In contrast to Koch, therefore, I think that speculative logic requires there to be, not two distinct “logics”, but *one* thinking (namely ours) that has two perspectives on the categories.
3. See VGPW 3: 127, and 1: 15.
 4. EL 107 / 146 [§ 60 R], and SL 7 / LS 3.
 5. Kolb (2010), 55.
 6. Kolb (2010), 55, emphasis added.
 7. See Kolb (2010), 57, and Burbidge (2007), 191.
 8. See LPWH 54 / 63: “World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom”.
 9. On the changes to the logic of quality that Hegel made in the second edition of the *Logic*, see Houlgate (2006), 320-1.
 10. See EL 36-7 / 56-7 [§ 12 R], and EN 6 / 15 [§ 246 R].
 11. See EN 57-9, 65-83 / 75-8, 85-106 [§§ 267 R, 270 R and A], and Houlgate (2005a), 138-44, 147-53.
 12. Note that not all laws can be derived by philosophy in this way. There is thus an element of contingency in nature that is itself necessary; see Houlgate (2005a), 113.
 13. PS 39 / 47 (Miller has “educational requirements”), and EL 45 / 67 [§ 19 R].
 14. On the role of religion in preparing us to “give up” fixity, see Houlgate (2006), 69-71.
 15. See SL 54-5, 738 / LS 67-8, LB 288, and Houlgate (2006), 115 ff. James Kreines has also recently defended the view that Hegel’s logic is a metaphysics, or more precisely a “*metaphysics of reason*” (Kreines [2015], 3). Such metaphysics sets out, in Kreines’ words, “the *explanatory* reasons why things do what they do, or are as they are” (3). In my view, however, the principal aim of Hegel’s logic cannot be to give an account of “explanatory reason” (11), since he may not presuppose at the start that there are any “things” to “explain”. Such logic thus does not address, at least at the outset, “the most general and direct questions about [the] *why* or *because* of things” (3), but simply unfolds what, if anything, is inherent in pure being. This is not to deny that the categories derived in the *Logic* turn out to provide partial explanations – together with other contingencies – for what happens in nature and history; but Hegel’s *aim* in a free, presuppositionless logic, cannot be to undertake a “philosophical enquiry into explanatory reasons, or reason in the world” (9).
 16. See SL 89 / LS 110, and 1: 172-3.
 17. See SL 110 / LS 137: “this affirmation, as qualitative, is *immediate* self-relation, is *being*”.
 18. See Houlgate (2006), 129-31, and Plevrakis (2017), 134: “being is conceived as so indeterminate that it is not even distinguished from thought”.
 19. For a slight qualification of this claim, see vol. 1, chapter 2, note 54.
 20. See Guyer (1993), 188: “He [Hegel] just seems to assume that the real nature of thought and being are identical”.
 21. For Kant, “the *least* one can say of an object” is that it is “*absolutely possible*” or “possible in itself” (CPR B 381). For Hegel, however, the least one can think at all (besides nothing) is pure, indeterminate being that does not yet take of the form of either an “object” or “possibility”.
 22. Descartes (1984-91), 2: 17.
 23. Robert Stern suggests that if we are to make no assumptions about thought or being, we should assume neither that there is a “gap” between thought and being, *nor* that

there is no such gap, but we should “suspend judgement” on the issue altogether (Stern [2009], 221-2, note 33). In my view, however, setting aside all assumptions about thought leaves us with thought *as pure being*. Hegel’s radical scepticism thus eliminates any supposed “gap” between thought and being, and does not just lead to a suspension of judgement about the issue (which leaves open the possibility that there might be such a gap after all).

24. On SL 16 di Giovanni translates “Sache” as “essence”.
25. Di Giovanni has “it does not reach out to it outside itself”.
26. SL 420 / LW 105. See also Pierini (2014), 111.
27. EL 246 / 318 [§ 167], and SL 588 / LB 104. See also SL 517 / LB 16: “the concept in and for itself which constitutes a *stage of nature* as well as of *spirit*”.
28. Fichte (1994), 39.
29. Fichte (1994), 85.
30. See Fichte (1994), 84.
31. EPM 70-1, 192 / 98-100, 267 [§§ 400 R and A, 457].
32. See EPM 147, 202 / 206, 283 [§§ 418 R, 465].
33. See SL 29-30 / LS 34: “The Platonic idea is nothing else than [. . .] the concept of the object”.
34. See also EL 66 / 94 [§ 28]. On Hegel’s view of previous metaphysics, see Houlgate (1986), 96-112, and Bowman (2013), 62-101. – Note the difference between my understanding of Hegel’s relation to pre-Kantian metaphysics and Pippin’s understanding. On my view, Hegel rejects the pre-critical metaphysical assumption (retained by Kant) that thought is minimally judgement and that judgement is “the form of truth”, but he accepts the metaphysical claim that “thought-determinations” are the “*fundamental determinations of things*” in the strong sense in which Spinoza would understand this claim (EL 66 / 94 [§ 28 and R]). For Pippin, by contrast, “the logic that is a model for both transcendental logic and Hegelian science is still a judgemental logic”, but Hegel distances himself from the pre-critical claim that “empirically unaided thought” is “transparent to the conceptual structure of the real” (Pippin [2017], 200, 202). For a longer discussion of Pippin’s interpretation of Hegel’s *Logic*, see 1: 127-32.
35. See Spinoza (1994), 86 [*Ethics* IA1].
36. See EL 80-6 / 112-20 [§§ 40-3].
37. SL 30 / LS 35, and CPR B 303.
38. CPR B 87; see also B 138.
39. See EL 81 / 113 [§ 41].
40. Walsh (1975), 70, and CPR B 303.
41. See CPR B 629; CJ 272 / 315 [§ 76], and Houlgate (2006), 127.
42. See CPR B 33: “[intuition] relates immediately to [objects]”, and 322- 3: “The understanding, namely, demands first that something be given”.
43. On some problems in Hegel’s interpretation of Kant, see vol. 1, chapters 2 and 15.
44. One might think that the difference between thought and being emerges in logic itself when being proves to be “concept” and so can be contrasted retrospectively with its initial immediacy. The “concept”, however, is still a form of being – an ontological structure – and not yet conscious thought. The latter does not arise in Hegel’s

- system, and distinguish itself from being, until the philosophy of spirit. See e.g. EPM 147, 202 / 205-6, 283 [§§ 418, 465].
45. EL 81 / 113 [§ 41], and SL 17 / LS 17.
46. EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R].
47. Since speculative logic begins with being that then proves to be essence, one might argue that such logic is at first more clearly ontology and becomes an explicit *logic* only when being proves to be concept, judgement and syllogism. As I have argued above, however, speculative logic is both ontology (or metaphysics) and logic throughout its course.
48. See SL 47 / LS 57: “a certainty which, on the one hand, no longer stands over and against the object [*Gegenstand*] but has interiorized it, knows it as itself”.
49. Paul Redding expresses a similar view: Hegel’s approach has “the seemingly paradoxical result that features of Aristotle’s ‘realism’ are reintroduced to counter Kantian subjectivism. For Hegel the categories do not simply reveal the *form* of thought that is able to be conceived apart from and opposed to the world, they must also reveal features of the world *itself*” (Redding [2007], 222). Redding’s Hegel differs from mine, however, in developing a “*radically* fallibilist” philosophy in which norms – including categories – are subject to rational revision (228-9), rather than a strictly a priori philosophy that discloses the *necessary* structure of thought and being.
50. See also EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R].
51. Pure nothing is less than pure being, since it is the absence of being – though, as we shall see, it immediately vanishes into being, just as pure being vanishes into nothing (see SL 59 / LS 71-2). See also 1: 142-3.
52. See Houlgate (2006), 144-62, and Houlgate (2013), 1-13.
53. The claim made here that consciousness knows objects in their “antithesis” to itself might seem to conflict with the claim made above (1: 115) that everyday consciousness belongs to “the naive way of proceeding” that is “still *without* consciousness of the antithesis of thought within and against itself” (EL 65 / 93 [§ 26], emphasis added). The two claims are, however, compatible. Consciousness, as Hegel conceives it, *distinguishes* between itself and its object (and so knows the latter in its “antithesis” to itself); but at the same time it takes its object – at least initially – to be there before it without explicit mediation by thought (and so in that sense it has a “naive” awareness of the object). Consciousness may have to avoid subjective error in its apprehending of the object (as in the case of perception), but it has no reflective awareness that its *own thought* is what opens up the object to it; it just takes the object to be something given. By contrast, both Kant and Hegel do have such reflective awareness, though, as we have seen, Hegel thinks that our thought can disclose the nature of being itself, whereas Kant does not.
54. SL 29 / LS 34, and PS 15 / 20.
55. PS 15 / 20. See also Houlgate (2013), 5.
56. On the method of phenomenology, see Houlgate (2013), 15-30.
57. See PS 76 ff. / 89 ff., and Houlgate (2013), 54 ff.
58. On the role of the phenomenologist (beyond merely “looking on”), see PS 55-6 / 67-8, and Houlgate (2013), 23-8.

59. See EL 41, 124 / 63, 168 [§§ 17, 78 R]: “the free act of thinking”, “the freedom that abstracts from everything”.
60. See also PS 491 / 528-9.
61. See PS 22, 485-6 / 29, 523, and SL 28-9, 46-7 / LS 32-3, 57.
62. Di Giovanni has “every reference to an other”.
63. See Houlgate (2013), 188. The content of pure knowing is also understood at the end of phenomenology to be “in this self-like *form* in which existence [*Dasein*] is immediately thought [*Gedanke*]” and so to be “concept” (*Begriff*) (PS 491 / 528). Insofar as “concept” is here just a synonym for “thought”, then pure knowing is conceived as the simple unity of thought and being (if we reduce *Dasein* to *Sein*). If, however, “concept” is understood here in the more developed sense we encounter in the logic of the concept, then it, too, along with “substance” needs to be set aside at the start of logic.
64. In the *Logic* the concept does not unite substance with *conscious* subjectivity – which is what Hegel has in mind at the end of the *Phenomenology* – but rather exhibits the logical structure of subjectivity, namely self-determination. Conscious subjectivity does not arise in Hegel’s system until the philosophy of spirit (see this chapter, note 44).
65. See Movia (2002), 17, and Houlgate (2006), 91-2. – The relation between the *Phenomenology*, the “resolve” to think purely, and the *Logic* has been explored in detail by Hans Friedrich Fulda, and Fulda’s arguments deserve more extended discussion than I can give them here. Suffice it to say that I am in broad agreement with him that, for Hegel, phenomenology is necessary in order to *justify* the science of logic to “unscientific consciousness”, but not necessary in order to enter philosophy at all: “for it is supposed to be possible to begin science in subjective cognition with the immediate resolve [*Entschluß*] to think purely” (Fulda [1975], 52-3). I would add, though, as I have done in this section, that, even at the end of phenomenology, an act of abstraction is required in order to begin with pure being. – In contrast to both Fulda and myself, Robert Stern criticises the idea that there are two routes into speculative logic. He does so in a thought-provoking essay that attempts to show that Hegel’s thought is compatible with pragmatism, especially that of C.S. Peirce. Stern begins by noting that Peirce distinguishes between “real” and “artificial” doubt. Doubt is “real”, we are told, when “something happens or is said that causes a challenge to what you already believe or take for granted” (Stern [2009], 213). Doubt is “artificial”, on the other hand, when it is generic and “apparently groundless” (225), as Cartesian scepticism is understood by Peirce to be. Following Peirce, Stern then argues that Hegel advocates, as a way into logic, *only* “real” doubt, which requires “some evidence of error” and which drives forward Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, in which the “real problems” faced by ordinary consciousness are examined (225, 233). Like Peirce, Stern contends, Hegel “sees little force in Cartesian ‘antecedent’ scepticism, so it would be a mistake to think that this was the basis for Hegel’s desire to construct a presuppositionless philosophy” (225). Moreover, Stern does not think that Hegel’s commitment to presuppositionlessness itself “commits him to the idea that free thought must begin with no assumptions”. It requires, rather, that thought “is always able to reflect further on the presuppositions with which it starts, even though it cannot reflect on

them all at once from a position that makes no assumptions whatsoever" (228). Stern's Hegel thus rejects the idea that one can enter speculative logic through an act of free abstraction that sets aside at one go all assumptions about thought and being. We are led to such logic only by the "real" doubts explored in the *Phenomenology*, and that logic itself involves a continuing reflection on the "real" problems generated by the conceptual presuppositions with which it begins. – The arguments I have put forward in this study and elsewhere should make it clear that I regard Stern's "pragmaticizing" interpretation of Hegel as one-sided (though I acknowledge its originality and subtlety). In my view, Hegel clearly distinguishes *two* routes into speculative logic: one through the *Phenomenology*, in which specific "real" problems are indeed identified in each shape of consciousness, and one through the (quasi-Cartesian) "resolve" to set aside all assumptions simply because they are *assumptions* (a resolve that is not, however, just "artificial" but is motivated by a number of significant factors, including the demands of modern freedom). – Furthermore, Stern's reasons for thinking that Hegel rejects the non-phenomenological, quasi-Cartesian route into logic seem to me to be misplaced. First, Stern thinks, mistakenly in my view, that Hegel's arguments in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* are directed, not just against Locke and Kant, but also against Descartes' "antecedent scepticism" (220), and indicate that Hegel dismisses *any* general consideration of, or scepticism towards, our cognition that precedes cognition itself (not just those approaches that treat cognition as an "instrument" or "medium"). Second, Stern appears to misunderstand Hegel's comments about scepticism in the remark to § 78 of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. In the paragraph itself Hegel insists that "all [. . .] presuppositions or prejudices must equally be given up when we enter into the science" (that is, into logic). In the remark he then notes that a *scepticism* that "has gone through all forms of cognition" and exposed the "nullity of such presuppositions" might offer itself as an introduction to logic. He maintains, however, that this would be an "unpleasant" (*unerfreulich*) way into logic, since such scepticism (unlike phenomenology) "would only have to find the finite forms empirically and unscientifically, and to take them up as given" (EL 124 / 167-8). He seems, therefore, to reject the idea that logic should be preceded by a "consummate scepticism", or universal doubt, that sets aside all our assumptions before we begin logic itself. Stern certainly understands Hegel to reject this idea: as he writes, "what the sceptical position represents in its insistence on universal doubt is the requirement for presuppositionlessness; but the science of logic fulfils this requirement *without the need for universal doubt*" because assumptions are undermined *within* logic itself (Stern [2009], 234, emphasis added). To my mind, however, this is not exactly Hegel's conclusion in the remark. Hegel argues that the scepticism he criticizes is, indeed, redundant, but this is because the demand for "*universal doubt*" and "*presuppositionlessness*" is fulfilled, *before* logic begins, by "the freedom that abstracts from everything", that is, by "the resolve of *the will to think purely*". A general, quasi-Cartesian (or, as Peirce would have it, "artificial") scepticism does, therefore, provide a way into logic, as Hegel conceives it (as a complement to the path of "real doubt" traced in the *Phenomenology*); but such scepticism takes the form, not of the unscientific (and "unpleasant") undermining of a series of forms of cognition, but of the free act of suspending all presuppositions about thought and

being *at one go*. In my view, therefore, Stern misreads this important remark and errs in denying that, for Hegel, there is a second route into speculative logic besides phenomenology. He is right to note, however, that this aspect of my reading of Hegel renders the “pragmatist appropriation of Hegelian thought thoroughly misconceived” (218).

66. Pippin (1989), 6.
67. See Pippin (2015), 159-160, and especially Pippin (2017) and Pippin (2019). For my review of Pippin (2019), see Houlgate (2019).
68. Pippin (1989), 39, 95.
69. Pippin (1989), 40, 171, 246, 248.
70. Pippin (1989), 39.
71. Pippin (1989), 98.
72. Pippin (1989), 91.
73. Pippin (1989), 187, and SL 16 / LS 15.
74. Pippin (1989), 91, 99, 201, 216. See also Stern (2009), 47-8.
75. Pippin (1989), 188, 191. See also 1: 113.
76. Pippin (1989), 180.
77. See Pippin (2017), 206: “to say what something is, or to explain why something happened [. . .], is not an intuitional grasp”.
78. Pippin (1989), 190, 193.
79. Pippin (1989), 175.
80. Note that the term “consciousness” is not used here in the technical sense (familiar from the *Phenomenology*) to refer to a form of mindedness that takes itself to be in “antithesis” to its objects, but is simply a synonym for “awareness”. I do not mean to suggest, therefore, that thought in speculative logic stands over against being in the way that e.g. perception stands over against its object. This also applies to other similar uses of the term in this section.
81. See SL 517 / LB 16.
82. See SL 689 ff. / LB 227 ff.
83. See EPM 202 / 283 [§ 465]: intelligence “knows that what is *thought*, *is*; and that what *is*, only *is* in so far as it is thought”. See also this chapter, note 44.
84. Pippin (1989), 187.
85. Pippin (1989), 183.
86. Pippin (1989), 183.
87. Pippin (1989), 198, 216, 240-241, 250.
88. Pippin (1989), 182-3.
89. Pippin (1989), 221.
90. See Houlgate (2006), 141.
91. See Pippin (2017), 214: “forms of the thought of objects, of objects considered in their intelligibility. These latter constitute all that objects could be”.
92. Pippin (1989), 183.
93. See Houlgate (2006), 140. Pippin’s Hegel is thus closer to Fichte than my Hegel is (see 1: 113) – though this does not mean that he is no different from Fichte. For Pippin on Fichte, see Pippin (1989), chapter 3.
94. The German is: “daß das, was *ist*, damit daß es *gedacht* wird, *an sich* erkannt werde”.

95. Another way of explaining the difference between my position and Pippin's is as follows. For Pippin, all objectivity is "conceptually mediated" (Pippin [1989], 183), and therefore no *immediate* intuition of things is possible; that is to say, in this case mediation excludes immediacy (see Pippin [2017], 201, 217). In my view, by contrast, conceptual thought, which "mediates" our understanding of the world, is precisely what gives us direct, *immediate* consciousness of being. Mediation thus does not exclude immediacy, but makes it possible – as genuine *immediacy*. See vol. 1, chapter 4, note 64.
96. My error in *The Opening of Hegel's Logic* thus did not lie in claiming that Pippin's Hegel does not set out "all that 'being' could intelligibly *be*". I stand by that claim. My error lay in maintaining that Pippin himself draws the distinction between what being can *intelligibly be* and what it can intelligibly *be* and restricts speculative logic to setting out the former (see Houlgate [2006], 141). In fact, Pippin draws no distinction between the two but identifies the latter with the former. In my view, however, this is actually to *reduce* the latter to the former and to overlook the fact that thought itself conceives of being as *irreducible* to being-for-thought (where "irreducible to" does not have to mean "beyond"). – The ground of my initial misreading, by the way, is to be found in the distinction Pippin draws between "the conditions of thought" and "the conditions of existence", or between "the requirement that any being be characterized 'contrastively'" and "the claim that *beings* actually oppose and negate each other" (Pippin [1989], 188, 207). These distinctions give the impression that, for Pippin himself, Hegel tells us how things must be *thought* to be but not how they must actually *be*, and that is how I initially interpreted Pippin's position. In fact, however, Pippin's overall view is that no intelligible distinction between being-for-thought and being itself can be drawn, since the latter is exhausted by the former. Pippin's distinction between how beings are "characterized" and how they *are*, is thus actually one between two options, the second of which is unintelligible apart from the first.
97. In this sense, as I noted above (1: 115-19), Hegel's logic preserves a difference between thought and being in their unity. See SL 39 / LS 46, and EL 99 / 136 [§ 51 R].
98. Pippin (1989), 7.
99. See Houlgate (2006), 130-1, 136. This does not mean, of course, that Hegel begins his logic with substance. It means that Hegel's logic claims to disclose the nature of being in the same way Spinoza claims to disclose the nature of substance, but through an explicit study of the categories of *thought* that is inspired by Kant.

Chapter 6

1. Kirk et al. (1983), 247.
2. Kirk et al. (1983), 251. Hegel states on SL 70 / LS 86 that, for Parmenides, being is "the indeterminate" and has "no relation [*Beziehung*] to any other". Later, however, he notes that Parmenides supplements the idea of being with that of "*necessity*" as "the *ancient limit which is imposed on all*" (see SL 284 / LS 367).
3. See SL 78 / LS 96: "nothing is not yet *posited* in being". See also SL 58 / LS 71, and Henrich (1971), 77-8.

4. See SL 47 / LS 58; EL 137 / 184 [§ 86 A1], and Winfield (2012), 48-9. In *Reason and Justice* Winfield maintains that to begin without assumptions is to begin “with just indeterminacy”, but he avoids the problem highlighted here by conceiving of indeterminacy as “undifferentiated, uncontrasted”. See Winfield (1988), 126.
5. See Henrich (1971), 85-6. See also Movia (2002), 16, and Houlgate (2006), 79-83.
6. Henrich (1971), 85-6.
7. See SL 46-7, 50 / LS 57, 61, and 1: 125.
8. See 1: 127.
9. Heidegger recognizes that Hegel’s logic begins with an act of abstraction or “renunciation” – more specifically, in Heidegger’s view, with the “*complete renunciation* of the grounding of the difference between being and beings” (Heidegger [2015], 25). Heidegger insists, however, that Hegel’s thought remains *conditioned* by this renunciation and by what is negated in it. For Heidegger, the renunciation is expressed in the thought that thought, at the start of the *Logic*, must be “*un-conditioned*”, and so must think being as “un-determined” and “un-mediated”; but precisely this “un-” announces “the most secret *condition*” from which thought cannot free itself, namely determination and mediation and the “renouncing” or negating of them (15, 24-5). In Heidegger’s view, therefore, Hegel’s logic is not at all systematically presuppositionless, but is secretly guided from the start by the unquestioned “metaphysical” thought that being involves determination and mediation (23). Heidegger is thus blind to the fact that being, at the start of the *Logic*, is not conceived as “un-determined” and “un-mediated”, and so is not secretly “conditioned” in the way he describes. Pure being, for Hegel, is the result of abstracting from, or “renouncing”, all we ordinarily take being to be (as Heidegger recognizes), but then also of abstracting from and setting aside the very the fact that it is the result of abstraction. Being is thus thought in its immediacy as pure being, *not* as im-mediacy or in-determinacy (or as un-conditioned). The subsequent development of logic is in turn generated by pure being alone, not by the tacit assumption that being is determinate and mediated. From a Hegelian point of view, therefore, Heidegger’s interpretation of the beginning of the *Logic* betrays his failure to think through consistently what it means to renounce prior assumptions about being: namely that one must also keep being free of mediation *by* that renunciation and of the “un-” in which the latter is expressed.
10. See O’Connor (2000), 127: “the assumption of immediacy, with which the subject desperately deceives itself about itself as mediation”.
11. Of course, the very act of taking being *as* pure immediacy “mediates” that immediacy. It does so, however, precisely by abstracting from the fact – or actively *forgetting* – that being is a mediated result. This is not to deny that, at the start of logic, we retain a *reflective* awareness that pure being is such a result; but being itself is thought as sheer immediate being.
12. Kirk et al. (1983), 248.
13. Kirk et al. (1983), 251.
14. See Henrich (1971), 78-9. For Schelling, by contrast, the proposition “pure being is nothing” is “just meant as a tautology” (HMP 140 / AS 4: 550).
15. Henrich (1971), 82.

16. This is not to deny that phenomenology proceeds immanently: it traces the immanent development of conscious experience. But the immanent study of being itself cannot proceed by examining our *experience* of thinking it. Pippin, by contrast, states that the *Logic* sets out “pure thought’s experience of itself” as it tries to discover “the conceptual conditions required for there to be possibly determinate objects of cognition” (Pippin [1989], 176, 186).
17. See White (1983), 7.
18. See Houlgate (2006), 279.
19. See Martin (2012), 70-1, and Houlgate (2006), 277-8: “its own utter indeterminacy prevents it logically from even being pure and simple being”.
20. See e.g. CPR B 347-8.
21. Di Giovanni translates “*Nicht*” as “nothing”.
22. SL 59 / LS 72, and EL 141 / 188 [§ 88]. See also SL 76 / LS 94: “When taken in its immediacy, nothing shows itself as *being* [*seiend*]”.
23. One should also note that “existence” (*Existenz*) is more than mere “being” and so, strictly speaking, should not be invoked at this point in support of the claim that nothing proves to be pure being. “Existence” is a later category that arises in the doctrine of essence (see SL 420 ff. / LW 105 ff.).
24. On the idea of such a shadow logic, see Willett (1990).
25. 1.1.1.C.1 refers to Book 1 (Doctrine of Being), Section 1 (Quality), chapter 1 (Being), sub-section C (Becoming), sub-sub-section 1 (Unity of Being and Nothing). This and subsequent references throughout this book identify sub-divisions of the *Science of Logic*.
26. See SL 61 / LS 74, and Kirk et al. (1983), 247.
27. See Popper (1966), 2: 40.
28. See also SL 68 / LS 84.
29. Pippin (1989), 189. In Pippin’s view, becoming – like being and nothing – is, rather, a “self-defeating thought” that fails to provide the “‘self-determined’ object” that (he claims) Hegel seeks throughout the doctrine of being.
30. Kirk et al. (1983), 250.
31. Plato (1993), 60 [103b].
32. See Houlgate (2006), 42-4. Hegel maintains, however, that in the *Parmenides* dialogue Plato himself embraces dialectic by “dissolving and refuting limited assertions through themselves”. See SL 34-5 / LS 40, and 1: 11.
33. See Houlgate (2006), 287.
34. Being and nothing do not, therefore, *coexist* in becoming, but they constitute the latter only insofar as each passes over into, and so is replaced by, its absolute opposite; see 1: 145, and Martin (2012), 71-2.
35. Note that, if somehow both were completely eliminated, we would be left with *nothing*, so “nothing” would not in fact be eliminated. Both, therefore, must be preserved, but without their purity.
36. Christian Martin objects that deriving *Dasein* from the vanishing of being and nothing does not derive it from becoming itself. *Dasein* is derived, rather, from the “logical predecessors” of becoming “as they behave outside the latter [*außer demselben*] in supposed isolation, namely as vanishing” (Martin [2012], 75). Yet this

- objection overlooks the fact that the vanishing of being and nothing just *is* becoming and does not fall “outside” the latter; deriving *Dasein* from such vanishing thus *is* to derive it from becoming. Martin himself explains the transition from becoming to *Dasein* by arguing that becoming can be a “movement” or “process” only “insofar as it entails a resulting [*Resultieren*] and thereby something that has become [*ein Gewordenes*]”. This, however, just begs the question, for it leaves unexplained precisely *why* becoming should issue in a result – something that *is* explained by thinking becoming as the vanishing of the vanishing it is.
37. On the transition from becoming to determinate being, see also Houlgate (2006), 288-92.
 38. Derrida (1982), 107. See also Derrida (1986), 28: “spirit’s [. . .] circular path of a return to self”.
 39. Derrida (1982), 107, and Derrida (1986), 133.
 40. Derrida (1982), 107, and White (1983), 57. In *Margins*, Derrida asks “what might be a ‘negative’ that could not be *relevé* [. . .] but would work, then, as pure loss?” (Derrida [1982], 107). He thereby fails to see that the “pure loss” of purity must result in the matter concerned *no longer being purely itself* and thereby being *united* with its negation. The sublation of something into a unity with its negation does not, therefore, prevent its loss occurring, but is precisely the result *of* the loss of the thing’s purity. See Houlgate (1996).
 41. See Bowie (1993), 1.
 42. It is true that in 1.1.1.C.2 Hegel describes becoming itself as the “*determinate* unity” of being and nothing (SL 80 / LS 99). Yet becoming is not determinate in the sense Schelling has in mind, namely as “not yet real being” and thus “being *in potentia*”. It is “determinate” only in the minimal sense that it is not utterly indeterminate but “the unity of *being* and *nothing*”. Note, though, that, despite Hegel’s words, becoming is not truly the *unity* of being and nothing, since these moments do not coexist in it side by side, but vanish restlessly *into* one another. Being and nothing coexist in a settled unity only in *Dasein* (which comes after becoming, not before it as Schelling claims).
 43. See also Houlgate (2006), 292-6.

Chapter 7

1. Di Giovanni, by contrast, translates “*Dasein*” as “existence”. This, however, can be a source of confusion, since the category of “existence” (*Existenz*) – translated by di Giovanni as “concrete existence” – arises later in the *Logic* (see SL 420 / LW 105).
2. On Hegel’s account of determinate being, see also Houlgate (2006), 303-11.
3. See EL 146 / 194 [§ 89 R]: “a unity in which they are only *moments*”.
4. Di Giovanni translates “*soweit das Dasein seiend ist*” as “to the extent that existence is existent”.
5. See also SL 88 / LS 109.
6. Miller misunderstands Hegel at this point and translates the relevant passage as follows: quality “is equally to be posited in the determination of nothing, when *it* will be posited as a differentiated, reflected determinacy, no longer as immediate or in the form of being” (SLM 111, emphasis added).

7. Di Giovanni has “still a quality”.
8. Pippin (1989), 197.
9. We will see later that every something is “caught up in external influences and in external relationships” (SL 96 / LS 120). Yet this does not mean that it stands in relation to every other thing; and even if it did, that would not itself mean that we would need to identify all the relations into which something enters before we can know what it is. See Houlgate (2006), 142.
10. On the necessity of retrospective reconception in, but especially at the end of, the *Logic*, see 1: 91-9.
11. Nietzsche (1967), 171 [*Case of Wagner* § 7].
12. Though at its second appearance Miller translates it as “negative” (SLM 111) and di Giovanni as “negating” (SL 85).
13. Note that the “negative” here is not just the “not-” or “non-” in non-being – *Verneinung* – but *negation* (*Negation*), or negative quality, itself conceived as a moment of reality.
14. As we saw on 1: 12, however, Hegel thinks that there is a *speculative* moment in Spinoza’s thought, namely in his idea of *causa sui*. Insofar as Spinoza’s God is *causa sui*, therefore, it is presumably not just implicitly “nothing” for Hegel.
15. See Nietzsche (1968), 128 [*Anti-Christ* § 18]: “In God nothingness deified, the will to nothingness sanctified!”.

Chapter 8

1. JL 593 / 95 [§ 6 note 2]: “The *most abstract* concept is [. . .] the concept of *something*, for that which is different from it is *nothing*”. See also CPR B 346-7.
2. Leibniz (1998), 262 [*Principles of Nature and Grace* § 7].
3. Di Giovanni has “simple existent self-reference”.
4. See also the fourth paragraph of 1.1.2.A.c (SL 89 / LS 110-11).
5. As noted in vol. 1, chapter 1, note 14 di Giovanni translates both “*Insichsein*” and “*Ansichsein*” as “being-in-itself”, thereby obscuring the logical difference between them.
6. A qualification, however, needs to be added here. Something, as self-relating being, is *not*-just-simple-negation and in this respect is *self-negating*, and so self-relating, negation, as stated in the paragraph. Yet if one thinks of something explicitly as *self-relating-being-that-is-not-just-negation*, then, strictly speaking, the negating and negated moments are not the same and the negation of negation is not itself *self-negating* negation. See Houlgate (2006), 318, where I relate this issue to a criticism of Hegel raised by Michael Theunissen.
7. Double negation in the form of something is, as we have seen, affirmative, rather than explicitly negative. It will become intensely negative in an explicit way, however, when something proves to be finite. See e.g. 1: 222-3.
8. See SL 92 / LS 114; 1: 179-82, and this chapter, note 14.
9. The view that otherness does logically precede negation, indeed the possibility of negation, is attributed by Rodolphe Gasché to Heinrich Rickert and Werner Flach; see Gasché (1986), 92.

10. Indeed, even as sophisticated an interpreter of Hegel as Richard Winfield blurs the distinction between otherness and negation. See Winfield (1989), 72: “negation is [. . .] what can be categorized as otherness”. – In the first edition of the *Logic* Hegel does not himself distinguish clearly between otherness, on the one hand, and negation and determinacy, on the other. He writes, for example, that “*Dasein*, as including non-being within it, is essentially *determinate* being [bestimmtes *Sein*], negated being, other [*Anderes*]” (WLS 69). Yet otherness in the first edition does not coincide exactly with negation in the second edition, but also exhibits aspects of otherness in the latter. See WLS 68-9, and SL 91-2 / LS 112-14.
11. Indeed, something begins to be explicitly determinate before the emergence of limit, when it proves to have a being-in-itself and at the same time to be other-related (see 1: 192).
12. See Plato (1926), 254-5 [143b-c].
13. On the differences between Kant, Aristotle and Hegel on change, see Houlgate (2006), 327-8.
14. The change that emerges here is the one anticipated on SL 90 / LS 111 as the change of something “only in its concept” – the one made necessary by the very concept of something. The change anticipated on that page as “*posited*” is the one, discussed later, that is produced in the constitution of a thing by another thing. See SL 96-7 / LS 120-1: “the first [change] [. . .] belonged to the inner concept; now the change is also posited in the something”.
15. Di Giovanni has “*only unites with itself*” (SL 92). The German is “*geht [. . .] nur mit sich zusammen*” (LS 114).
16. In the first edition of the *Logic* change is not discussed until Hegel has derived the categories of determination and constitution (see WLS 82). The sequence of categories leading to change in the first edition is thus: being, nothing, becoming, *Dasein*, otherness, being-for-other and being-in-itself, reality, something, limit, determinacy (including determination, constitution and quality), change. In the second edition, as we have seen, the sequence leading to change is: being, nothing, becoming, *Dasein*, quality, negation and reality, something, other, change. Being-for-other and being-in-itself, determination and constitution, and limit all arise *after* change proves to be inherent in being “other” (though Hegel will also see a ground of change in the constitution of something [SL 96 / LS 120]).

Chapter 9

1. At the start of 1.1.2.B.a.2 Hegel writes that “something *preserves* itself in its *Nichtdasein*” (SL 92 / LS 114). “*Nichtdasein*”, or “negative determinate being”, is translated by di Giovanni simply as “non-being”, but it is used by Hegel as an alternative term for “other” or “otherness”.
2. “*Anderssein*” can also be translated as “being-other”. In what follows, therefore, I do not draw a sharp distinction between “otherness” and “other”.
3. See SL 92 (l. 16) / LS 114 (l. 22): “nicht rein sein *Anderssein*”.
4. Strictly speaking, something is related only to *another* something, and only the “one” (*Eins*) is related to *many* others (SL 135-6 / LS 171). In this chapter and

- elsewhere, however, I will sometimes talk of something being related to other *things* (in the plural).
5. Di Giovanni has “*moments* of one and the same unity”.
 6. Di Giovanni has “negative reference to non-existence”. The German is “negative Beziehung auf das Nichtdasein”, but it is clear from the rest of the paragraph that “Nichtdasein” is not just “non-existence” but covers both being-for-other and the other itself.
 7. Di Giovanni has “reference to itself” for “Beziehung auf sich”.
 8. Miller translates “*an ihm*” misleadingly as “*within it*” (see SLM 120).
 9. See CPR B 59: “the things that we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them to be”. Kant does not deny, however, that things in themselves may in stand in relation *to one another*. See B 59: “nor are their relations so constituted in themselves as they appear to us”.
 10. SL 25, 93-4 / LS 27, 116-17, and EL 87 / 121 [§ 44 R].
 11. See EL 88 / 122 [§ 45 A]: “only appearances for *us*”.
 12. See also Houlgate (2006), 338-45. I say “to some extent” here, because, as we are about to see, certain aspects of a thing’s being-for-other are determined by the other things to which it relates (see 1: 194-5).
 13. See SL 460-2 / LW 154-7, and EPM 72-3, 78-83, 136-40 / 101-2, 109-17, 192-7 [§§ 401 R and A, 411, R and A].
 14. This is not to deny that we can have private thoughts, but the fact *that* we are thinking will be evident in some way (even if only to a brain scan), and in many cases what we are thinking will be betrayed by movements of the face or body of which we are unaware.
 15. “Determination”, as it is conceived here, should also be distinguished from “determination” in the general sense of “category”. “Determination” is just one of the many *determinations* that arise in the *Logic*.
 16. The “*determination of the human being*” (*Bestimmung des Menschen*) – a phrase that echoes the title of Fichte’s famous text of 1800, usually translated as *The Vocation of Man* – is thus rational thought or “thinking reason”, since human beings assert their intelligence and intrinsic rationality – more or less – in all their engagements with the world (SL 96 / LS 119).
 17. The true infinite is the process formed *by* its finite moments and so is not something *other* than the latter. Yet there is still an immediate difference between the infinite *process* and its *moments*. See 1: 245.
 18. A thing’s other-relatedness is what is outwardly “*in it*” (*an ihm*) for others (SL 93 / LS 115-16). In the first paragraph of 1.1.2.B.b.2, therefore, Hegel expresses the thought that being-for-other takes two forms by stating that “that which something has *in it* divides itself”. In a subsequent paragraph, however, Hegel coins another term to refer to other-relatedness or being-for-other, namely “*being-in-the-something*” (*Am-Etwas-sein*), and states that the latter “falls apart” into “two extremes”. The language is different, but the point is the same: other-relatedness takes two different forms, one that is determined by the thing’s being-in-itself (and so belongs to its determination) and one that is not determined in this way.

19. Note, therefore, that in explaining how constitution converts itself logically into determination, Hegel relies on his earlier account of the way in which the *other*, in changing, proves to be *something*: “Conversely, the being-for-other, isolated as constitution and posited on its own, is in it [*an ihm*] the same as what the other as such is” (SL 97 / LS 120).
20. See Houlgate (2006), 345-6.
21. The fact that a thing’s intrinsic being can change (or be changed by other things) doesn’t mean that there is no aspect of a thing that remains constant, such as its measure (or its fundamental “concept”). What something is in itself can, however, change in such a way that the thing exceeds its measure, and in that case the thing will cease being what it is and become an altogether different thing. See also 1: 203.
22. Constitution and determination are thus now no longer just two distinct “sides” of something, but inseparable, integrated moments of the thing. They are distinct sides only for external reflection (see SL 103 / LS 128).
23. On the two different meanings of “determination”, see this chapter, note 15.
24. Di Giovanni has “something behaves in this way in relation to the other *through itself*”.
25. Di Giovanni translates “Insichsein” misleadingly as “in-itselfness”. He also places a comma after the preceding clause and a semi-colon after “*through itself*”, instead of the other way round (as it should be).
26. Note that this account of the emergence of limit modifies slightly that given in Houlgate (2006), 356-7.
27. What is said here about a thing’s limit is also true of its “specific quantum” or measure (see 2: 248-9).

Chapter 10

1. See EL 148 / 197 [§ 92 A].
2. See SL 99 (ll. 8-10) / LS 123 (ll. 6-9). Since something limited is, precisely, *something*, and thus a *self-relating* entity or “being-within-self”, it is not quite true, as Brady Bowman contends, that “qualitative beings have an existence that is *purely differential*, constituted by – but also *exhausted in* – their mutual contrasts” (Bowman [2017], 230, emphasis added).
3. The limit is not, however, itself explicitly an “other”, since it is a form of simple negation, not self-relating negation. The limit is the “other” of the two somethings only in the sense that e.g. reality and negation can be described as “other” than one another.
4. See LL 100 / 109: “the limit thus falls between the two, but the limit belongs to something itself”. (Butler translates “Grenze” as “border”.)
5. See e.g. MF 223 / 67 [chap. 2, Exp. 6 R]: “the common boundary [*Grenze*] of two spaces, which is therefore within neither the one nor the other space”.
6. Burbidge (1981), 51.
7. See Pierini (2014), 115.
8. See EL 148 / 197 [§ 92 A]: “contradiction within itself”.
9. Di Giovanni has “posited in them as limit”. The German is “gesetzt mit der Bestimmtheit als Grenze”.

10. See SLM 127: “this double identity of both, of determinate being and limit”. Miller’s second “of” needs to be deleted to restore Hegel’s meaning.
11. Spinoza (1994), 103 [*Ethics* IP28].
12. Spinoza (1994), 97 [*Ethics* IP16]. One can argue that there are modes, for Spinoza, because substance is the “cause of itself” (88 [*Ethics* IP7]) and the system of modes is just what substance causes itself to be: the set of effects of its own causality. This does not explain, however, why there should be finite modes in particular, rather than just infinite ones.
13. Di Giovanni translates “Vergehen” as “transgression”, whereas Hegel’s use of the word here is meant to echo its use earlier to name one of the moments of becoming: ceasing-to-be (see SL 80-1 / LS 99-100).
14. See Heidegger (1962), 296 ff.
15. Spinoza (1994), 159 [*Ethics* IIP4Dem.].
16. See Spinoza (1995), 260 [Ep50]; SL 87 / LS 107, and 1: 12.
17. Spinoza (1994), 85 [*Ethics* ID2].
18. See Houlgate (2006), 373. – To pull various thoughts together: change, whether externally or internally produced, preserves the identity of a thing, unless it takes the thing beyond its limit and thereby destroys it, in which case it renders the thing “finite”. To be finite in the strict sense, however, is to bring *oneself* to an end (rather than to be destroyed by another) and to do so by *necessity* (rather than just as one possibility among others).
19. Though, in another respect, the limited thing is something only *in* explicitly *not*-being-the-other.
20. Di Giovanni has “mournful note” for “Trauer”.
21. Descartes (1984-91), 2: 31. See also Houlgate (2006), 400.
22. It should be clear from the foregoing, and my general approach to Hegel’s *Logic*, that I take Hegel to be disclosing the true nature of finitude itself, what it *is* to be finite. Pippin, however, takes a different view: “if the question is whether he [Hegel] wishes to make some claim about finite reality, or about the unsuccessful attempt by thought to think being finitely, [. . .] the answer must be the latter” (Pippin [1989], 193).
23. Di Giovanni translates “Insichsein” here as “being-in-itself”, which is the term with which he otherwise (though not always) translates “Ansichsein” (see SL 92 / LS 114).
24. Hegel does not draw explicit attention to this here, but it follows from the way in which the thought of an intrinsic limit is derived.
25. One might ask why Hegel does not similarly consider here the idea of an intrinsic constitution. The answer, I would suggest, is this. Focussing on the relation between the determination and constitution of the finite something would simply take us back to the earlier analysis of those moments. What is new in the finite something, and what specifically distinguishes the latter, however, is the idea of an intrinsic *limit*. It is this idea, therefore, that Hegel now makes more explicit.
26. See SL 104 (ll. 33-4) / LS 130 (l. 15).
27. Di Giovanni has “connection of the two sides”.
28. “die seine immanente Grenze in ihm negierende Beziehung seiner an sich seienden Bestimmung darauf”.

29. Note that a limitation is not just any contingent defect in a thing. It is a defect that is integral to the thing and that prevents it from being what it is in itself. Other defects that do not prevent a thing from being what it is in itself, and so make no real difference to it, are not “limitations” of it in Hegel’s sense.
30. See SL 105 (ll. 1-2) / LS 130 (ll. 16-18).
31. Such a limitation may not always be obvious, or it may take time to develop (if something initially works well). At some point, however – if Hegel’s argument is correct – finite things will reveal their limitation.
32. See Houlgate (2006), 384-7, and Winfield (2012), 93. – A thing can have a limitation in comparison with another if both share the same intrinsic nature (or purpose), but the other lacks the fault. Even in this case, however, the thing still falls short of what *it* is intrinsically.
33. Hegel does not say whether this “should” or “ought”, like the intrinsic being to which a thing’s limitation belongs, is mutable. Insofar as the should is no longer intrinsic being in the full sense, there is no reason for it to be mutable, since it is not directly exposed to being reconstituted by other things. On the other hand, insofar as it is the negation of the thing’s mutable limitation, and so, as it were, tracks the latter, then, one might think, it should be mutable itself (at least to an extent).
34. The finite *as finite* is self-negating being; yet it is not, strictly speaking, the negation of negation, since it negates its own *being* (into non-being) (see 1: 211-13). As the relation between the limitation and the ought, however, the finite is explicitly the negation of negation.
35. Schopenhauer (1969), 311 [§ 57].
36. It was stated on 1: 201 that insofar as something enjoys an intrinsic being of its own that is untouched by the other, it does not need to keep the other at bay but can allow part of itself to be connected to the other or be “other-related”. On the other hand, something proves to have a *limit*, insofar as it has no space of its own, untouched by the other, in which to be truly itself, and so can be self-relating being or something only by *excluding* the other from itself in some respect. Nonetheless, through its limit something is *itself*, and indeed turns out to fall “outside” its limit, so in that sense it can rest (or come to rest) calmly alongside its limit. A limitation, by contrast, *prevents* something from being what it is intrinsically, so the latter must assert itself negatively against the limitation. It does so by transcending it.
37. See SL 104 (ll. 11-14) / LS 129 (ll. 26-30).
38. SL 104 (ll. 31-4) / LS 130 (ll. 12-15).
39. Indeed, this second limitation lies in the fact that the thing can only *transcend* – reach *beyond* – its limitation, rather than integrate the latter, as something positive, into what it is (or perhaps remove it altogether).
40. Later in the *Logic* Hegel writes that “finite things are finite because, and to the extent that, they do not possess the reality of their concept [*Begriff*] completely within them” (SL 672 / LB 207). Such a “concept” is thus a further developed form of the “ought” that the finite thing, *as finite*, fails to realize adequately. When a finite thing – a thing born to die – does fully realize its concept, it can be said to be “infinite”. Indeed, as we shall see in the next chapter, qualitative infinity, in Hegel’s view, can be exhibited only by such finite things (1: 246-7). Such infinity, however,

does not completely protect things from their finitude, and eventually they will exhibit limitations and meet their end.

Chapter 11

1. See also SL 102 / LS 127: “if [. . .] its end is rather to be grasped as *nothing*, then we are back at that first, abstract nothing that itself has long since passed away”.
2. At this point Hegel makes no distinction between the “negative” and “negation”, in contrast to earlier in the *Logic*. See 1: 165.
3. Di Giovanni translates “zunächst” as “momentarily”.
4. Di Giovanni has “rejoined itself”.
5. To summarize: the second thing is what it is for the first thing *not* to be, and at the same time it is the first thing itself *as* the non-being it is intrinsically. The second thing, therefore, is *not*, and yet in another sense *is*, the first thing.
6. Leibniz (1998), 116 .
7. Leibniz (1998), 133-4.
8. On ground and substance, see SL 386 ff., 489 ff. / LW 64 ff., 190 ff.
9. For Kant, by contrast, it is precisely our reason that seeks the infinite in the form of the unconditioned condition of judgements and objects. See CPR B 364, 378-9, and 1: 316-17.
10. See SL 91 / LS 113.
11. See SL 112 / LS 140: “the finite is transcended in the infinite” (*Es wird über das Endliche hinausgegangen in das Unendliche*). Di Giovanni, by contrast, makes the finite active: “We have the finite passing over into the infinite”.
12. See SL 122-3 / LS 155, and 1: 10.
13. For a brief Hegelian critique of Levinas in this regard, see Houlgate (2006), 432-5. – Like Nietzsche, therefore, Hegel is critical of the familiar metaphysical idea that there are “two worlds” – a finite here and now, and an infinite beyond (see SL 111 / LS 138). Nietzsche interprets the “two-world” idea as the symptom of life-denying *ressentiment* (see Nietzsche [2003], 141: “hatred of a world that makes us suffer [. . .]”), whereas Hegel shows the idea to rest on an inadequate conception of infinity. For both, however, the idea of an infinite “beyond” arises through the *negation* of finitude and change. – On the similarities and differences between Hegel and Nietzsche, see also Houlgate (1986).
14. See Theunissen (1980), 280.
15. See EPM 142 / 199 [§ 413], emphasis added; SL 127 / LS 160, and Houlgate (2006), 406-7.
16. See PS 126-38 / 144-56, and Houlgate (2013), 109-23.
17. SL 111 (ll. 39-40) / LS 139 (ll. 16-17).
18. See SL 112 (ll. 10-16) / LS 139 (ll. 30-9).
19. See SL 119 / LS 149: “the image of the progression to infinity is the straight *line*”.
20. Hegel refers to the progress as “this bad infinity” on SL 113 (l. 19) / LS 141 (ll. 21-2).
21. See also LL 106 / 115. The progress to infinity is no more a mere fiction than is the bad infinite, but is encountered, for example, in the endless alternation between sleeping and waking (see EPM 68 / 95 [§ 399]).

22. Di Giovanni has “*without this connecting reference*”.
23. See SLM 144.
24. In fact, Hegel notes, there are “two such unities”, since the infinite and finite are each separately this unity. – Di Giovanni translates “*verrufen*” as “scandalous”.
25. Di Giovanni has “uneven” for “*schief*”, but the latter means “wrong” (or “misleading”) here.
26. Di Giovanni translates “*Vermittlung in sich*” as “*implicit* mediation”.
27. Theunissen appears to miss this transformation of the finite and the infinite into the *process* of returning to, and uniting with, oneself (and into moments of that process). All he can see in “Hegel’s theory of affirmative infinity” is “an ever-recurring return to the point of origin” and thus a movement of “fruitless rotation” (Theunissen [1980], 293, 295-6). Hegel insists, however, that in returning to themselves in the other, the finite and infinite do not return to their original condition and then just repeat the same movement endlessly; rather, they *become* the process of uniting-with-themselves that they are not, and cannot be, at the start. In Hegel’s words, “they are thus a *result* and, as such, not in the determination they had at the *beginning*” (SL 117 / LS 147). Theunissen’s failure to understand this transformation, and his consequent dismissal of Hegel’s account of true infinity as “disastrous” (296), are serious weaknesses in what is otherwise one of the most thought-provoking books on Hegel’s *Logic*.
28. Di Giovanni translates “*hinwegfallen*” as “dissolve”.
29. Di Giovanni has “and, second, of being *at the same time* the finite and the infinite over against the **infinite**”. The German text, however, is “und zweitens das Endliche und das ihm gegenüberstehende Unendliche *zugleich* zu sein”, and the “ihm” clearly requires the last word of the English version to be “finite”, not “infinite”.
30. See SL 80 / LS 99, and 1: 148-9, 253, 288.
31. On true infinity, see also Houlgate (2006), 423-7, and Winfield (2012), 100-3. – Insofar as the infinite eventually proves to be the Idea, it follows that the Idea cannot simply be “something” in relation to “something else”. Nature will thus not be the other *of*, or other *than*, the Idea, but the Idea *itself* in its otherness (see EL 42 / 63 [§ 18]).
32. See Houlgate (2006), 431-2, and LL 110 / 119: “love and friendship are examples of the infinite”. On true infinity as “relation to self in the other”, see also EL 151 / 201 [§ 95], and Martin (2012), 96-7.
33. See PS 111-12 / 128-9, and Houlgate (2013), 90-2.
34. This sense of being unbounded, free and truly infinite, Hegel believes, is what Christianity understands by “eternal life”. Eternal life is thus not a life that goes on forever, but one that exhibits the *quality* of true infinity. Furthermore, this quality of being and life can be enjoyed only by beings who are finite. Eternal life is thus not to be found after death in some timeless beyond, but it is exhibited in the here and now by beings that are in the process of *ceasing to be*. Only beings born to die can have eternal life. See Houlgate [2005a], 265-6.
35. Di Giovanni translates “*das Ideelle*” as “the idealized”.
36. This is not to deny that they are appearances of – or, rather, caused by – things in themselves, but the appearances in space and time do not themselves exist apart

- from the (possible) cognition of them (see LHP 3: 177-8 / VGP 4: 155-6, and CPR B 42-4).
37. See also SL 121 / LS 153: “the *ideality* of both, in the sense that [. . .] they are only *moments*”, and Plevrakis (2017), 148. Olivier Tinland puts this idea at the heart of his interpretation of “Hegelian idealism”. He emphasises that, for Hegel, ideality is not a function of “epistemological conditioning”, but a matter of “metaphysical constitution”: it is a quality that belongs to *being* finite. See Tinland (2013), 186, 191-2.
 38. Insofar as human beings as a whole are coming to self-consciousness, and so becoming spirit, in history, they exhibit (to a greater or lesser degree) the quality of true infinity. As merely finite beings, however, that give way to generations of further finite beings, they exhibit the *bad* infinity of endless repetition.
 39. See Heidegger (2015), 9-10.
 40. On SL 120 / LS 151 Hegel writes that “ideality can be called the *quality* of infinity”. It would be more accurate, however, to say that ideality is the quality of the finite as a moment of true infinity. Indeed, Hegel states in the *Encyclopaedia* that “this ideality of the finite is the most important proposition of philosophy” (EL 152 / 203 [§ 95 R]). – Bowman argues, rightly in my view, that finite objects, for Hegel, are not mind-dependent; yet he claims that they are “ideal”, for him, because they are “constituted solely by relations”, and so are “ungrounded in themselves”, and so are “radically *dependent* on an *infinite* ground” (Bowman [2013], 102, 114-15). This conception of the “idealism of the finite” is, however, hard to reconcile with Hegel’s own account of finite things: for, although those things, as *finite*, are mere moments of a process, they remain, as *somethings*, self-relating entities that are not just reducible to their relations with others (see e.g. 1: 217-18). – Pippin has a very different interpretation of Hegel’s idealism. For him, such idealism is not the directly ontological thesis that finite things, as finite, are moments of processes, but “in a nutshell” the *transcendental* thesis that “there is and must be a kind of spontaneous, positing reflection necessary for the determinacy of any determinate being to be accounted for” (Pippin [1989], 216; see also, especially, 198-9). For my discussion of Pippin’s interpretation of Hegel, see 1: 127-32.

Chapter 12

1. See SL 185 / LS 235, and 2: 150-2.
2. As becoming, being and nothing are each the process of *vanishing* itself; but, as moments of becoming, each is *that which* vanishes into the other. See 1: 148-9.
3. Note that the true infinite does not get reduced to a mere moment in the same way, because it is the process *of* its moments, rather than self-relating determinacy in relation *to* its moment.
4. For a brief but helpful summary of the whole logical development of the one, see Plevrakis (2017), 153-4.
5. In this sense one might say that Parmenides’ “being” is actually a *one*, since “strong necessity holds it within the bonds of a *limit*, which keeps it in on every side” (Kirk et al. [1983], 251, emphasis added).

6. For Hegel's further views about the atomists, see LHP 2: 87-94 / VGP 2: 86-92, and for the views of Leucippus and Democritus themselves (as reported by Greek sources), see Kirk et al. (1983), 413 ff. – Marx's doctoral dissertation (1841) on Democritus and Epicurus draws on Hegel's concepts of "being-for-self" and "repulsion" in order to illuminate their atomist principles. His principal focus, however, is on the Epicurean idea that atoms achieve independence – or "being-for-self" – by "swerving away" from motion in a straight line (and therein "repelling" other atoms). This idea of "swerve" or "declination" plays no role in Hegel's account of being-for-self and the one in the *Logic*, since it involves the thought of motion (which belongs to nature), though in his lectures on the history of philosophy Hegel does note that, for Epicurus, the movement of atoms "deviates" (*weicht ab*) from the straight line. Hegel appears to connect this deviation, however, with the "weight" (*Schwere*) that belongs to Epicurean atoms, rather than, as Marx does, with their attaining being-for-self and so "realising" their logical nature as atoms. According to Cicero, Epicurus in fact "adduced no cause to produce that swerve". For Marx, however, Cicero was looking in the wrong place: the Epicurean swerve has no physical cause, but it nonetheless has a ground, namely in the logic or "law" of the atom (*lex atomi*) that drives it internally to realise its independence. See Marx (2006), 45, 60, 113-18; VGPW 2: 312-13, and Epicurus (1994), 51 [text 15].
7. See 1: 255-6, and SL 132 / LS 166.
8. See McTaggart (1910), 22-5.
9. See EL 154 / 205 [§ 97 A].
10. For Hegel, multiplicity in nature is, more precisely, a consequence of the fact that space is pure *quantity* "as existing immediately and externally" (EN 29 / 42 [§ 254 R]). As we shall see in this volume, chapter 14, however, quantity is itself the continuity of many discrete *ones* – and space, accordingly, is the continuity of many "heres" – so it is ultimately the logic of *being-one* that makes multiplicity in nature necessary.
11. See also SL 140 / LS 177.
12. SL 741 / LB 291, and LHP 2: 207 / VGP 3: 36.
13. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel derives the many directly from the "distinguishing of the one from itself" but he omits any mention of the fact that the one distinguishes its own *void* from itself, which then has to be shown to be another *one* (in the way we have explained) (EL 154 / 205 [§ 97]).
14. Plato (1926), 252-5 [142e-143a]. See also SL 76 / LS 93-4.
15. Düsing (1990), 186. Düsing claims (177) that Plato's own ontology, which avoids the "paradoxes and problems of eleatic dialectic", is set out in the *Sophist*.
16. Düsing (1990), 177-80, and Miller (1991), 88-92.
17. See SL 34-5 / LS 40-1, and LHP 2: 206 / VGP 3: 35.
18. SL 136 / LS 171, and Koch (2002), 47.
19. See also SL 133 (ll. 6-8) / LS 168 (ll. 4-6). For a brief but helpful account of repulsion, see Winfield (2012), 123-6.
20. See SL 346-8 / LW 15-17, and Houlgate (2011), 142-5.
21. Hegel maintains that this idea of the one that is indifferent to its being one of *many* underlies the idealism of Leibniz, for whom "each substance is like a separate world" (see SL 137 / LS 173, and Leibniz [1998], 66 [*Discourse* § 14]). Leibniz, however,

- does not examine the logic of repulsion that *generates* the many from the one; his idealism, Hegel claims, just “takes up *plurality* immediately as a *given*” (SL 137 / LS 173; see also Koch [2018], 124).
22. Di Giovanni has “absolute lack of reference”.
 23. See SL 138 (ll. 1-2) / LS 174 (ll. 15-17).
 24. Di Giovanni has “*common connecting reference*”. – See also EL 155 / 206 [§ 98]: “when repulsion is considered in itself [. . .]”.
 25. To be real, we recall, is to be “this, *not* that” and also to be something in its own right. To be ideal, by contrast, is to be a mere moment that is no longer “an *independent being*” (SL 119 / LS 150). See 1: 247-8.
 26. See e.g. MF 211 / 49-50 [chap. 2, Exp. 2].
 27. Hegel also examines “matter” as an abstract moment in relation to “form” in the doctrine of essence, and he introduces the concept of force into his discussion of crystals in the philosophy of nature. See SL 392-6, 455-9 / LW 72-7, 148-54, and EN 41 ff., 193 / 56 ff., 239-40 [§§ 261 ff., 319 R]. – In an otherwise illuminating essay on Kant and Hegel Sally Sedgwick loses sight of the fact that Hegel discusses repulsion and attraction in the *Logic* without reference to force. See Sedgwick (1995), 965-6: “It is with reference to the repulsive force [. . .]”.
 28. Note that in the course of 1.1.3 ones, or units, come in different forms: as indifferent to one another they are separated by a void, but as continuous with one another they are not. These two ways of being-one are not, however, mutually exclusive, but can be regarded as different *aspects* of being-one. Indeed, they can be found together in nature: for celestial bodies are separated by space that is a vacuum, and thus a “void”, and also a continuous quantity (and, of course, those bodies also attract and repel one another across the void that separates them).
 29. Kant makes a similar point about repulsive force in matter. Such force on its own, he writes, would “be confined within no limit of extension” and so “would disperse itself to infinity” (MF 220 / 63 [chap. 2, Prop. 5 Pr.]).
 30. Di Giovanni mistranslates “das Ausschließende” as “that which is excluded”.
 31. SL 143 (ll. 20-4) / LS 181 (ll. 12-17).
 32. This is not quite the argument Hegel himself presents here. Hegel’s claim is that the ones that attract one another are already implicitly “ideal”, because, as ones, they are “not distinguished from one another but are one and the same” (SL 143 / LS 181). The argument I have provided, however – which is based on Hegel’s own account of what it means for repulsion to presuppose attraction – shows that attraction, in presupposing repulsion, presupposes itself in a stronger sense than that of mere “sameness”.
 33. For a helpful overview of the intimate relation between repulsion and attraction, see Koch (2018), 128-30.
 34. See SL 144 (ll. 6-12) / LS 182 (ll. 3-11).
 35. This difference, however, as we saw above (1: 269-70), also entails the *indifference* of the one to being one of many, and in that sense it is quite different from the difference between repulsion and attraction, which are not indifferent to one another (see SL 136 / LS 172).
 36. It is true that the many are, as such, many *ones*; but, as we have noted, the one is not already many in being one, and the many do not already form the one of attraction

in simply being many. (The many presuppose attraction, only insofar as they are thought explicitly, not just as *many*, but as being many through *repulsion* that itself presupposes attraction.)

37. In the remark at the end 1.1.3.C Hegel examines Kant's account of repulsive and attractive force in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (1786) and points out that Kant understands matter on the basis of "these two opposing determinations as its fundamental forces". In this way, Hegel states, Kant banishes the atomistic, mechanistic view that matter consists only in "impenetrability" and "*point-like being-for-self*" (*für-sich-seiende Punktualität*) – in sheer repulsion – and with it the idea that such matter attracts other matter only "externally" (SL 148 / LS 187). Yet Hegel also criticises Kant for failing to conceive of repulsion and attraction as essential moments of *one another*. For Kant, they belong together as conditions of matter, but they are in themselves independent of and opposed to one another. He has thus not understood the inherent logic that binds them together internally, without reference to matter (or to the idea of "force") (SL 145-6, 148 / LS 184, 187-8). See MF 221 / 65 [chap. 2, Prop. 5 R], and 225 / 70 [chap. 2, Prop. 7 R1]: "the two moving forces are of completely different kinds, and there is not the slightest ground for making one of them dependent on the other". – Sedgwick expresses Hegel's principal point well (if one disregards her reference to "force", which does not enter into Hegel's logic of repulsion and attraction), when she writes: "without attraction as a precondition, there can be no force of repulsion and therefore no self-subsistent one" (Sedgwick [1995], 972).

Chapter 13

1. Recall that being "finite" here means not just ceasing to be, but being limited and so *not being infinite* (see e.g. 1: 233).
2. Reality and negation are both moments of their difference, but they also appear to be self-subsistent and separate from one another, since reality conceals the fact that it is *not* negation (and so contains the latter), and negation conceals the reality that it contains. The moments of "something", too, are – if only initially – quite distinct from one another. By contrast, being and nothing in becoming are radically "momentary" and non-self-subsistent, because they are vanishing determinations. Yet strictly speaking, they are only *described* by Hegel as "moments" of becoming, since each is, explicitly, *that which* vanishes into the other: *being-that-vanishes-into-nothing* or *nothing-that-vanishes-into-being*. Neither is explicitly a *moment-of-a-process*, as the finite is in the true infinite. See 1: 148-9, 245, 253.
3. Recall that this is not true of the finite and bad infinite; see 1: 281-2.
4. On being-for-self as quality "*brought to completion*", see 1: 251-2. On the one, more specifically, as the fulfilment of qualitative being, see 1: 257.

Chapter 14

1. Biard et al. (1981), 132.
2. See Houlgate (2014), 16-17.
3. See Johnson (1988), 36.

4. See 1: 290.
5. Di Giovanni omits the word “repelling”.
6. As Hegel puts it, therefore, “continuity is this moment of the *self-sameness* [*Sichselbstgleichheit*] of being-outside-one-another, the self-continuation of the different ones into those from which they are distinguished” (SL 154 / LS 195).
7. At the same time, as we saw on 1: 280-1, attraction relates to itself in the moment of repulsion that it contains, since the latter in turn presupposes and contains it.
8. Di Giovanni translates “Stetigkeit” as “steady continuity”.
9. Di Giovanni has “discreteness of confluent” for “zusammenfließende Diskretion”.
10. On the similarities and differences between these categories of quantity and those of essence, see Houlgate (2014), 20.
11. See 1: 290-1.
12. It should be noted that, initially, quantity simply displaces quality and so is considered on its own without being conceived as the quantity of some quality. Only later in the *Logic* will quantity prove to belong to something qualitative and to be the quantity of that thing. The claim that Hegel makes in the first remark in the section on quantity – that a field can change its quantity while remaining a field and so preserving its defining quality – thus assumes what is proven only later in the text: namely, that quantity belongs to something qualitative at all. See 1: 249, 294, and 2: 109-10, 150-2.
13. See also SL 168 (ll. 15-16) / LS 213 (ll. 11-12).
14. Spinoza (1994), 96 [*Ethics* IP15Schol.[V.]]. See also Spinoza (1995), 103 [Ep12].
15. In Spinoza’s view, imagination conceives of quantity as “composed of parts”, but the intellect understands it to be extension, an attribute of substance, and as such to be altogether indivisible. Spinoza does not deny, however, that finite modes of extension, or bodies, can be put together to compose more complex bodies, and that the latter are thus divisible even for the intellect. Yet the intellect knows that the parts, into which such bodies can be divided, are not fundamental constituents of being, but precisely modes of extension that is itself indivisible. See Spinoza (1994), 96, 126 [*Ethics* IP15Schol.[V.], IIL4].

Chapter 15

1. A shorter version of this chapter can be found in Houlgate (2016a).
2. See also SL 25-6 / LS 28-9, and EL 93 / 128 [§ 48 A].
3. For Kant’s conception of dogmatism, see CPR B xxxv, and 1: 40-1.
4. See CPR B 449 (though Hegel does not reproduce Kant’s wording exactly).
5. See EL 89, 92 / 123, 127 [§§ 46 R, 48 R], and SL 35 / LS 41.
6. See SL 157 / LS 199: “no other forms of thought than finite categories”.
7. See also Gueroult (1978), 272.
8. See 1: 244-5.
9. See also EL 91-2 / 126-7 [§ 48 and R], and Düsing (2004), 41.
10. Di Giovanni has “undispelled” for “unaufgelöst”.
11. See also Gueroult (1978), 274.
12. See Düsing (2004), 55.
13. See Houlgate (2006), 23-8.

14. See LHP 2: 303 / VGP 3: 145: "Skepticism, however, has for its object the contingency [*Zufälligkeit*] with regard to the content".
15. See SL 34-5, 76, 164-5 / LS 40-1, 93-4, 207-8.
16. Other influences that push Hegel towards presuppositionlessness include Descartes, Fichte and modern freedom more generally in the moral, political and religious spheres, as well as the "consummate" scepticism of the Greeks; see EL 124 / 168 [§ 78 R], and Houlgate (2006), 23-71.
17. See also Llewelyn (1987), 100.
18. See SL 381 / LW 59: "*all things are in themselves contradictory*".
19. Gueroult (1978), 272.
20. Di Giovanni translates "Geteiltsein" as "partition".
21. See Gueroult (1978), 279. Hegel describes both dividedness and divisibility as "absolute" or "infinite", but he does so to emphasise that each moment is asserted "absolutely" by itself in abstraction from the other. He knows that for Kant the thesis of an antinomy asserts a finite, limited series, whereas the antithesis asserts an infinite series (in the "bad" sense); see SL 198 / LS 251, and VGPW 3: 356-7. See also CPR B 532-3, and Grier (2001), 212.
22. See also CPR B 39, 463. Note that, for Kant, the second antinomy actually concerns *quality*, since it concerns "reality in space", namely matter, and its conditions, namely the parts of which it is composed; see CPR B 440, and Allison (2004), 363. The antinomy also concerns quantity, however, since what is at issue is whether or not a composite thing is composed of *simple* parts and thus is a "discrete quantity" (see CPR B 462-3, 554-5).
23. See also Sedgwick (2012), 172-3.
24. See also SL 160-1 / LS 202-3, and 1: 346-8.
25. Sedgwick (2012), 170, emphasis added.
26. See CPR B 170, 349, and Rohlf (2010), 202.
27. See Llewelyn (1987), 99: "there can be dialectical illusion, according to Kant, without dialectical contradiction and antinomy".
28. See Longuenesse (2007), 18. On CPR B 123 Kant entertains the thought that, without the categories, "appearances would nonetheless offer objects [*Gegenstände*] to our intuition, for intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking". It becomes clear, however, in the course of the transcendental deduction (in both A and B) and Kant's discussion of the principles of pure understanding that, without the categories, there could be no *objects* of experience or of intuition at all. Indeed, we could not even have determinate intuitions of determinate spaces and times. See e.g. CPR A 103 ff., B 160n, 202 ff., and Allison (2004), 112-16. This is not to deny that, as Allison puts it, receptivity, and thus intuition, "presents the data in a certain fixed manner, which is independent of the conceptual activity of the understanding"; but it is to insist, again with Allison, that, for Kant, we can represent such data as a determinate space – and thereby intuit an *object* – only under "conceptual conditions" (114).
29. See e.g. CPR B 136-7, and Houlgate (2016b), 66. We can, however, have unconscious representations without thought; see Allison (2004), 163-4.
30. Allison (2004), 309.
31. See Allison (2004), 310; and CPR B 387: "actions of the understanding", and B 672: "reason [. . .] posit[s] a certain collective unity as the goal of the understanding's

- actions”. – Note that reason not only unifies empirical concepts that are given to it by the understanding, but also conditions the forming of empirical concepts in the first place. It does so, for example, by presupposing a priori that there must be a fundamental “sameness of kind” (*Gleichartigkeit*) to be found in the varied matter of nature (see CPR 681-2, 685-6). This does not guarantee that common features will always be found in nature, but it encourages understanding to look for them. See Allison (2004), 424-5, and Ferrarin (2015), 52: “experience as ultimately rooted in reason’s ideas”.
32. See Allison (2004), 311, and Ferrarin (2015), 47. On the difference between “immediate” and “mediate” (or mediated) inference, see CPR B 360, and Grier (2011), 65.
 33. See Grier (2011), 66, and Rohlf (2010), 196-201.
 34. See CPR B 382-3: “pure reason leaves to the understanding [. . .]”.
 35. Rohlf (2010), 199. See CPR B 383, and Allison (2004), 317-18.
 36. See Grier (2001), 119-20.
 37. See CPR B 367: “the unconditioned [. . .] is never itself an object of experience”.
 38. Grier (2011), 70.
 39. See Allison (2004), 315: “the reciprocity of the *totality of conditions* and the unconditioned”.
 40. Note that the connection (assumed by reason) between something conditioned and its unconditioned condition is synthetic, for Kant, not analytic (CPR B 364-5). What is analytic is the connection between the conditioned and “some condition”: if the former is given, so is the latter (see 1: 323).
 41. Note that this applies to the ascending line only, not the descending line (see CPR 394).
 42. See also CPR B 436, 678-9; Grier (2001), 121-2, and Grier (2011), 69.
 43. See CPR B 439: “According to the idea of reason, the whole elapsed past time is thought of as *given* [*gegeben*] necessarily as the condition for the given moment” (emphasis added).
 44. See Grier (2001), 125.
 45. See Grier (2001), 123, and Allison (2004) 312.
 46. See Grier (2010), 196: transcendental illusion is the tendency, inherent in reason, “to take *subjective* demands for unification of thought to be *objective* characteristics of things”. See also Gardner (1999), 215, and Rohlf (2010), 193-5.
 47. Grier (2001), 126. See also Allison (2004), 330.
 48. Grier (2001), 124, 274.
 49. Allison (2004) 330.
 50. See e.g. CPR B 390, 547: “from any given member of the series of conditions I must always [*immer noch*] proceed empirically to a higher (more remote) member”.
 51. See Grier (2001), 121-2, 270. – *Transcendental* cognition, for Kant, is occupied with our a priori “mode of cognition of objects” (CPR B 25). Yet transcendental cognition thereby also determines the conditions “*of the objects of experience*” (CPR B 197). Since an idea of reason purports to present us a priori with an *object*, it is called a “transcendental” idea by Kant (see CPR B 377 ff.), and the illusion it contains is called “transcendental” for the same reason. A *logical* principle, by contrast, merely governs our understanding or reason, but does not purport to determine any object.

- Allison points out that ideas can also be regarded as “transcendental” because they are “indispensable for the proper functioning of the understanding”, even though their role is merely regulative (Allison [2004], 432). – On the very different sense of “transcendental” in the expression “transcendental use”, see this chapter, note 81.
52. See also CPR B 397, 672-3; Grier (2001), 123, and Grier (2010), 196-7.
 53. See CPR B 354, 397, 450, 672, and Grier (2001), 128.
 54. Like the ideas of reason, P_2 is thus a transcendental principle (since it purports to be objective and is also an a priori condition of unified empirical experience) that is at the same time merely regulative. See this chapter, note 51.
 55. See also CPR B 698, 709. Note that the idea of the “world” is “incoherent or self-contradictory”, from a “critical” standpoint, in a way that the soul and God are not, since it is idea of the totality of appearances as things in themselves. It is, however, still a conceivable object of thought. See CPR B 509, and Grier (2001), 176.
 56. This “realized” idea of an “actual object”, in my view, goes beyond the mere thought of an intentional object as such. Allison, by contrast, equates “realizing” an idea with “providing it with an intentional object” (Allison [2004], 438; see also 409).
 57. See Allison (2004), 425-6, 432-3, and Grier (2010), 204-5. On CPR B 697 Kant states that the ideas of reason are not in themselves dialectical. To my mind, however, this does not mean that they contain no illusion, but that they do not generate paralogisms and antinomies by themselves but require transcendental realism to do so (see also B 708).
 58. Allison (2004), 438, emphasis added; see also 409.
 59. See also CPR B 698-9, 709-10, and Allison (2004), 438-41. Note that not only the idea of reason, but also the *illusion* of reality it contains, plays a regulative role in the cognition of appearances (see e.g. CPR B 704-7).
 60. In the B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* the process through which the idea of the soul is generated is somewhat more complicated than the one sketched here. See 1: 340-1 (and the accompanying notes 89 and 91).
 61. See also CPR B 606-7. Strictly speaking there is a difference between the “ideal” as such and the idea of “God”. The “ideal” as such is the “idea of the *sum total of all possibility*” conceived, through a transcendental illusion, as a given object, that is, as “realised” (CPR B 601-2, 604). The idea of “God”, by contrast, is this idea, insofar as we “hypostatize it”, that is, conceive it as denoting a really existing being (CPR B 608). The idea of God first arises, therefore, when we succumb to the illusion in the “ideal” (though it remains as a regulative idea even after philosophical critique has taught us not to hypostatize it).
 62. Hegel is wrong, therefore, at least from Kant’s perspective, to say that antinomies could have developed in rational psychology (LL 41 / 50). See also CPR B 701.
 63. Note that parts of space are not conditioned by other parts, since they all coexist together, but the *limits* of a space are set, and so conditioned, by another space (see CPR B 439-40, and Allison [2004], 362).
 64. Guyer and Wood have “*given as a problem*”.
 65. Reference to things in themselves is explicit in this formulation of P_2 , but it is also implicit in P_2 as such (see 1: 318-19).
 66. See CPR B 365-6, and Grier (2001), 116, 128.
 67. See e.g. CPR B 518-22.

68. See e.g. CPR B 533: “this regress, which is never given absolutely *wholly* [*schlechthin ganz*]”, and this chapter, note 50.
69. Grier (2001), 175.
70. CPR B 528: “Further, it is likewise natural (in the minor premise) to regard appearances as things in themselves”.
71. See also CPR B 519; Grier (2001), 181, and Allison (2004), 21-3.
72. On the difference between an indefinite, “indeterminate” regress and a regress “to infinity”, see CPR B 539-42, 551-2; Allison (2004), 444, and vol. 1, chapter 16, note 64.
73. Appearances, conceived in this way, are given all at once in one, all-inclusive space, but they are also given together in one objective time, albeit as present and as *past* objects.
74. On the regressive process that generates the ideas, see also CPR B 379, and Allison (2004), 312-13. This regressive process is distinct, not only from the dialectical argument we have been considering, but also from the paralogisms and arguments in the antinomies.
75. On CPR B 360-1 Kant states that the conclusion of a syllogism is made by reason. Elsewhere, however, he makes it clear that such a conclusion is a *judgement* (thus an act of understanding) made necessary by reason. See e.g. B 364, 378, 386: “The actual judgement that expresses the assertion of the rule in the *subsumed case* is the conclusion (*conclusio*)”.
76. Grier (2001) 128.
77. See also CPR B 354, 450. Grier and Allison distinguish error from illusion by identifying the former with the *judgement* we make on the basis of the latter, and in this respect, as in many others, I follow both in this chapter (see Grier [2001], 116, 128, and Allison [2004], 329). Strictly speaking, however, illusion, for Kant, is also to be found “only in judgment” (CPR B 350). – Note, by the way, that the distinction between illusion and error is not always consistently sustained by Kant. On CPR B 532-3 he says that transcendental illusion, not just error, can be removed, but it is clear that the “illusion” concerned is in fact the *error* of taking the “world” to be “a thing in itself” (B 532).
78. Grier (2010), 197.
79. See CPR B 439, and 1: 320.
80. Guyer and Wood translate “gebietet” as “bids”.
81. Note that categories of understanding cannot tell us about things in themselves for two reasons. First, they are tied to sensuous intuition, whose a priori form is subjective; second, they are themselves a priori and therefore ultimately subjective (even though they are the forms of any possible object of experience). See 1: 29. – Note, too, that the meaning of “transcendental” in the expression “transcendental use” differs from that in the expression “transcendental cognition” (or “transcendental analytic”). Transcendental *cognition* determines the a priori conditions of the objects of experience and of their cognition (see this chapter, note 51). By contrast, the transcendental *use* of the categories extends their validity – illegitimately – beyond the objects of experience to things in themselves and seeks to know (rather than merely think) the latter through the categories. Transcendental cognition thus identifies a priori concepts and principles that are to be put to *empirical* use (as

conditions of the objects of experience), *not to transcendental use*. – The transcendental use or “misuse” of categories is, in Kant’s view, “a mere mistake of the faculty of judgment” or understanding, “when it is not properly checked by criticism, and thus does not attend enough to the boundaries of the territory in which alone the pure understanding is allowed its play” (namely experience). By contrast, the *transcendent* principles of reason “actually incite us to tear down all those boundary posts and to lay claim to a wholly new territory that recognizes no demarcations anywhere”. For Kant, therefore, “*transcendental* and *transcendent* are not the same” (CPR B 352). – The ideas of reason are “transcendental ideas” (in the same sense as “transcendental cognition”), insofar they purport to be ideas of objects (and are the conditions of unified understanding), but they are “transcendent concepts”, insofar as they drive us to “exceed [*übersteigen*] the bounds of all experience” (CPR B 384; see also B 671).

82. Note that Kant draws a distinction between the “world” and “nature”. The world is “the mathematical whole of all appearances” and is the object of the first two antinomies. Nature, by contrast, is the world considered as a “dynamic whole” governed by causality and is the object of the last two antinomies. See CPR B 446-7, and Allison (2004), 364-5.
83. See Gardner (1999), 249: “transcendental realism lies behind the assumption which generates cosmological contradiction”. Hegel recognizes this point on VGPW 3: 356, when he states that an antinomy arises, for Kant, only when the “completion” of the series of conditions “is declared to exist” (*als seiend ausgesagt wird*).
84. Allison argues that in fact only the mathematical antinomies provide an indirect proof of transcendental idealism (Allison [2004], 388 ff.).
85. See Sedgwick (2012), 167. Note that in all four antinomies of pure reason the thesis and antithesis are both shown to be false insofar as their shared assumption, transcendental realism, is shown to be false. There is, however, also a difference between the “mathematical” and “dynamical” antinomies. The theses and antitheses of the “mathematical” antinomies cannot be true at all (and so must simply be “dismissed”), since the series of appearances and their conditions can never form a totality, even if we reject transcendental realism, but is given only in a regressive “empirical synthesis” (CPR B 527, 557). By contrast, the theses and antitheses of the dynamical antinomies could, conceivably, both be true if transcendental realism were abandoned, since they would no longer be competing claims about the same domain, namely the “world” (or nature) as something given. The theses would rather make claims (still unverifiable, but also unfalsifiable) about purported intelligible objects or states of affairs outside the spatio-temporal series, whereas the antitheses would make claims about spatio-temporal objects and their conditions (conceived as a regressive series, but not a given totality). See CPR B 557-60; Gardner (1999), 257-61; Allison (2004), 365; Grier (2011), 79-80, and Wood (2010), 258-9. (This note, by the way, corrects the account of the “resolution” of the dynamical antinomies given in Houlgate [2016a], 52 n. 38.)
86. See Gardner (1999), 247, and Wolff, M. (2017), 60.
87. See WRP 408 / 670: “one of the two would have to be true, the other false”.
88. See CPR B 364, 436, and Grier (2001), 121-2.

89. See CPR B 378-80, 383, 390-6. For accounts of the complex (and by no means completely transparent) process of generating transcendental ideas, see Grier (2001), 132-7; Allison (2004), 316-22, and Rohlf (2010), 203-6. On “prosyllogisms”, see CPR B 364, 387-8.
90. CPR B 289, 379, 391. Compare this account of the production of the idea of the soul with the simpler account from the A edition set out on 1: 321-2.
91. CPR B 106, 379, 391-3. The justification for these “identifications”, such as it is, is the following. Kant notes that all our representations stand in a threefold “relation” (*Beziehung*), namely to the (thinking) subject, to objects as appearances and to objects of thought as such. The different forms of the unconditioned, derived from the different syllogisms and the categories of relation (*Verhältnis*), thus have to be thought together with these relations. It is this that then yields the specific ideas of the soul, world and God. See CPR B 391: “If we combine this subdivision with the above division [. . .]” (though regarding the idea of God, see also this chapter, note 61).
92. Such other categories include, for example, discreteness and continuity (in the second antinomy) and necessity and contingency (in the fourth).
93. On the connection between the categories of infinity and finitude, on the one hand, and continuity and discreteness, on the other, see 1: 313.
94. Di Giovanni has “infiltrate the opponent’s stronghold” for “in die Kraft des Gegners eingehen”, which makes Hegel’s purpose sound somewhat underhand.
95. Gueroult (1978), 273.

Chapter 16

1. See CPR B 821, and Allison (2004), 366.
2. “würde [. . .] keine Substanz sein gegeben worden” (CPR B 462).
3. Grier (2001), 195.
4. Grier (2001), 195, emphasis added.
5. See also CPR B 469: “if they were things in themselves, then the proof of the monadists would of course hold”.
6. Grier (2001), 202; see also 196.
7. The “tautological” claim made in the thesis is also made, explicitly, by Leibniz: “there must be simple substances, because there are composites; for the composite is nothing but a collection, or *aggregatum*, of simples” (Leibniz [1998], 268 [*Monadology* § 2]).
8. See SLM 193-4.
9. This is not to deny that simples could be thought without being put together into a composite. It is just composition – “being-put-together” – that cannot be thought without simplicity.
10. In what for her is stage 3 Grier has “space is not made up of parts, it is infinitely divisible”, but the proof does not mention infinite divisibility at this point (Grier [2001], 207).
11. Kreines claims that the argument for the antithesis actually leads to an infinite “regress”. The reason why is as follows: on the assumption that a composite consists of simples, the simple parts explain *why* the whole (of which they are parts) fills space, and then a further explanation is needed for *why* they themselves fill space,

and so on *ad infinitum*. (Kreines [2015], 118). On my reading, however, Kant's argument produces a *non*-regressive contradiction through the following stages: (a) simples make up a composite; (b) all composition is in space; (c) each simple must therefore occupy a space; (d) everything that occupies a space is composite; (e) therefore, the simples in a composite must be composite themselves, which is contradictory (and so undermines the thesis and proves the antithesis). Kreines' version of the argument diverges from Kant's, in my view, because it is guided by his general assumption that reason provides *explanations* for things – an assumption I regard as questionable (see vol. 1, chapter 5, note 15)

12. Grier (2001), 208.
13. See e.g. CPR B 532: "If one regards the two propositions [. . .]".
14. See CPR B 445-6, and Grier (2001), 212.
15. Grier (2001), 200. See also 1: 322-34.
16. See Grier (2001), 199-200, 210.
17. See Grier (2001), 209, 211. One can perhaps clarify the difference between the thesis and antithesis in the second antinomy through the following difference of emphasis. The thesis assumes that appearances are *things in themselves* and so considers them as such, without regard to what belongs to them as *appearances*, namely space. The antithesis, by contrast, takes *appearances* to be things in themselves and so considers them as entities *in space*, a transcendently real space that is independent of our cognition.
18. Grier (2001), 183; see also CPR B 499-500, and Grier (2011), 74.
19. Grier (2001), 200-1.
20. See CPR B 463: "space must consist of as many parts as the composite that occupies it consists of".
21. This does not mean, however, that Kant introduces the transcendental ideality of space at this point, and Hegel does not maintain that Kant does so.
22. See EL 94 / 129 [§ 48 A]: "the actual unity of those determinations".
23. Grier (2001), 212.
24. See 1: 302-3. Di Giovanni translates "Geteiltsein" as "partition".
25. Though contradiction continues to beset the world there merely *seems* to be (see 1: 338-40).
26. Grier (2001), 202. See also MF 219 / 62 [chap. 2, Prop. 4 R2]: "the *composite of things in themselves* must certainly consist of the simple". Hegel takes it to be a tautology that the composite is made up of the simple (SL 159 / LS 201).
27. Kant accepts that the mathematical point in space is *simple*, but he insists that it is merely the limit of a space, not a *part* of space. Space, therefore, is not "made up" of simple parts (and nor is time). See CPR B 211, 254, 812.
28. The antithesis, by contrast, maintains that everything in the world must be "divided [*geteilt*] to infinity" (CPR B 509). See 1: 359.
29. See Aristotle (1984), 1: 404-5, 439-40 [239b5-240a16, 263a4-b9].
30. See LHP 2: 69-70 / VGP 2: 69, and VGPW 1: 301, 303, 318.
31. See SL 164 / LS 208, and LHP 2: 70 / VGP 2: 69: "only the One Being is what is true".
32. See Kirk et al. (1983), 277: "Plato's essential point is that Zeno defended Parmenides against outraged common sense".

33. See SL 35 / LS 41; VGPW 1: 303, and Aubenque (1990), 208.
34. See VGPW 1: 302: “they posited one of the opposed predicates as the essence”.
35. Kirk et al. (1983), 267; see VGPW 1: 304.
36. Kirk et al. (1983), 273; see VGPW 1: 314.
37. VGPW 1: 305; Kirk et al. (1983), 270, and Aubenque (1990), 218.
38. Kirk et al. (1983), 270; see LHP 2: 66-7 / VGP 2: 63-4.
39. The Achilles paradox and the paradox of the moving rows do not show motion to be impossible directly, but show it only to be contradictory and for that reason impossible.
40. See Aristotle (1984), 1: 394 [233a26-31], and Kirk et al. (1983), 270-1.
41. Aristotle (1984), 1: 440 [263b4], and Kirk et al. (1983), 271.
42. Aristotle (1984), 1: 440 [263b5], and Kirk et al. (1983), 271.
43. Aristotle (1984), 1: 393, 439 [233a10-11, 263a28-9].
44. Aristotle (1984), 1: 440 [263b5-7], and Kirk et al. (1983), 271.
45. See Aristotle (1984), 1: 317 [185b10]: “for the continuous is divisible *ad infinitum*”.
46. See also Houlgate (2005a), 130-1.
47. See also SL 382 / LW 61, and Aubenque (1990), 218.
48. Kirk et al. (1983), 272, 275; see also VGPW 1: 312, 316.
49. See SL 164 (ll. 6-9) / LS 207 (ll. 23-6).
50. See SLM 198.
51. See Llewelyn (1987), 88.
52. See EL 160 / 213 [§ 100 R]: “the one is as one-sided as the other”.
53. See Düsing (2004), 54.
54. Spatio-temporal, material objects are not considered as such by Hegel until the philosophy of nature (see e.g. EN 47 / 64 [§ 263]), though mechanical objects are considered without reference to space and time later in the *Logic* (see SL 631 ff. / LB 157 ff.).
55. See SL 156 / LS 197, and EN 29 / 42 [§ 254 R].
56. See EN 31 / 44 [§ 256]: “the *negation* of space itself” is “the *point*”, “but the negation is the negation of *space*, i.e. it is itself spatial”. See also Houlgate (2005a), 123-4.
57. See EN 29 / 42 [§ 254 R], and Ferrarin (2001), 230.
58. Aristotle (1984), 1: 390-1 [231a23-5, b17]. See also 1: 393 [232b23-4].
59. Lear (1988), 70.
60. Aristotle (1984), 1: 391 [231b6]. See also 2: 1611 [1020a7-8]: “we call a quantity that which is divisible into two or more constituent parts of which each is by nature a one and a ‘this’”.
61. Ferrarin (2001), 231, emphasis added.
62. Aubenque points out that Aristotle does not embrace contradiction as Hegel does. He would not therefore see quantity as a unity of explicit *opposites*, and so, though speculative, he is not a dialectical thinker (see Aubenque [1990], 211, 217, 219).
63. See Düsing (2004), 54. There is, of course, a difference, for Kant, between space as a form of sensibility and quantity as a category, and space cannot be thought as a determinate limited space – as an extensive magnitude – without that category (see CPR B 202 ff.). Nonetheless, Kant states that space is “the pure image of all magnitudes (*quantorum*) for outer sense” (B 182) and, indeed, that it is itself “an

- infinite *given* magnitude” (B 39). (See also NF 296 [5726]: “space and time are *quanta a priori*”.) This justifies making reference to Kant’s conception of *space* in a discussion about the divisibility of *quantity*.
64. Kant’s claim on CPR B 211 that “space therefore consists only of spaces” should thus not be understood to mean that space is already divided into spaces. – Kant notes, by the way, that if we follow time backwards, or space outwards, rather than going deeper into a given whole, the regress will carry on “indefinitely” (*in indefinitum*), rather than “to infinity” (*in infinitum*). This is because the spaces and times that lie *beyond* (rather than within) the here and now do not constitute a given infinity that is all there before us. As Kant puts it, we can always ask after further times and spaces, but the latter, unlike the parts of a whole, are not already there “*to encounter*” (*anzutreffen*) (CPR B 542). See also Allison (2004), 444. (Kant’s claim in the Transcendental Aesthetic that space is “an infinite *given* magnitude” should thus be taken to mean that we can regress, or progress, across space indefinitely, not that space is a given totality [CPR B 39; see also A 25].)
 65. Kant also agrees with Aristotle that points are not parts of space, but limits at which space can be divided (see this chapter, note 27).
 66. Kant’s remark actually applies to a composite “quantum”, but in the following paragraph he writes that “space and time are *quanta a priori*”, so the remark clearly applies just as much to space.
 67. See Aristotle (1984), 1: 8 [5a10-11].
 68. The subtle difference between Kant and Hegel is due, I think, to the following fact: for Kant, continuous space is clearly *prior* to any parts that can be discerned in it, whereas, for Hegel, continuity and discreteness are (to use a non-Hegelian word) “equiprimordial” moments of quantity, even though initially their very unity means that continuity predominates. For further differences (and similarities) between Kant and Hegel on quantity as such (without reference to space), see Houlgate (2014), 25-7.
 69. Grier (2001), 208.
 70. See CPR B 440, 553.
 71. Aristotle (1984), 1: 8 [4b20].
 72. For Hegel, discrete magnitude remains continuous in its explicit discreteness and so does not consist of a plurality of given “atoms”. Like continuous magnitude, therefore, it is infinitely divisible, but not already divided into a fixed set of units. A number, by contrast, does consist of a fixed set of units (e.g. 3, 4 or 5), and so is a “determinate aggregate” like Kant’s “discrete quantity”. See SL 166, 169 / LS 210, 214, and 2: 4-5, 11-12, 15-16.
 73. See EL 91-2 / 126-7 [§ 48 R], and SL 158 / LS 200.
 74. See NF 296 [5726] (and this chapter, note 27), and CPR B 211, 467, 469.

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